IMAMATE

The Vicegerency of the Prophet (s)



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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point

Meaning of Imamate and Khilafah, as well as Shi'i and Sunni views on topics such as .necessity of Imamate, infallibility, and Shura

Part ۱: General Meaning

Meaning of Imamate and Khilafah .۱

Al-Imamah literally means 'to lead '; al-imam means 'the leader'. In Islamic terminology al-imamah (Imamate) means 'universal authority in all religious and secular affairs, in succession to the Prophet'(۱). al-Imam means 'the man who, in succession to the Prophet, '.has the right to the absolute command of the Muslims in all religious and secular affairs

The word 'man' signifies that a female cannot be an Imam. 'Absolute command' excludes those who lead in the prayers: they are also called 'Imam of the prayers', but they do not have absolute authority. 'In succession to the Prophet ' denotes the difference between a prophet and an Imam. The Imam enjoys this authority not directly, but as the successor .of the Prophet

The word Al-Khilafah means 'to succeed' and al-khalifah means 'the successor'. In Islamic terminology al-khilafah and al-khalifah practically signify the same meanings as .al-ima'mah and al-ima'm repectively

Al-Wisayah means ' the executorship of the will', and al-wasiyy means 'the executor of the will'. Their significance in Muslims' writings is the same as that of al-khilafah .((caliphate) and al-khalifah (caliph

It is interesting to note that many previous prophets were also the caliphs of

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al-'Allamah al-Hilli: al-Babu 'l-hadi 'ashar, Eng. tr. W. M. Miller, p. ۶۲; Mughniyyah: - ١ .Falsafat Islamiyyah, p. ۳۹۲

their predecessor prophets, thus they were nabiyy and khalifah both; while other prophets (who brought new shari'ah) were not caliphs of any previous prophets. Also there were those who were caliphs of the prophets but not prophets themselves.

The question of Imamate and caliphate has torn the Muslim community apart and has affected the thinking and philosophy of the different groups so tremendously that even the belief in Allah (at-tawhid) and the prophets (an-nubuwwah) could not escape from this divergence of views.

This is the most debated subject of Islamic theology. Muslims have written thousands upon thousands of books on caliphate. The problem before me is not what to write; it is what not to write. In a small work such as this, one cannot touch on all the various aspects of this subject, let alone go into detail on even those topics which are described therein. This provides only a brief outline of the differences regarding the caliphate.

It may be of help to mention here that regarding this question the Muslims are divided into two sects: the Sunnis, who believe that Abu Bakr was the first caliph of the Holy Prophet of Islam; and the Shi'ahs, who believe that 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, was the first Imam and caliph.

This fundamental difference has led to other differences which shall be described in the following chapters.

Summary of Differences .۲

The Holy Prophet has said in a hadith which has been accepted by all sects of Islam:

My ummah (followers) will shortly break up into

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.(seventy-three sects, all of which shall be condemned except one(۱

The seekers of salvation have always made untiring efforts to inquire into the matter to discover the right course - the path to salvation. And indeed it is necessary for every man to take reason as his guide, try his best in this matter and never despair of attaining the truth. But this can only be possible when he has a clear view of the radical differences before him, and discarding all bias and prejudices, examines the points at issue with .thoughtful mind, always praying to Allah to lead him in the right path

For this reason I propose to briefly mention here the important differences and conflicts together with the arguments and reasonings of each sect, in order to facilitate the path of :inquiry. The main questions are

Does it lie with Allah to appoint a prophet's successor or is it the duty of the ummah (the .۱ ?followers) to appoint whomsoever they please as successor to the Prophet

In the latter case, did Allah or the Prophet place in the hands of the ummah any .۲ systematic code containing the rules and procedures for the appointment of a caliph, or did the ummah by their unanimous consent before appointing a caliph, prepare a set of rules to which they adhered (subsequently), or did the ummah act according to what they thought expedient at the time and according to the opportunity at their disposal? Had ?they the right to act as they did

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al-Khatib at-Tabrizi: Mishkatu 'l-masabih, Eng. tr. James Robson, vol.I, p.۴۵; al-Majlisi - ۱ has collected, in a complete chapter, traditions to this effect in Biharu 'l-anwar,, vol. ۲۸, pp. .۲-۳۶; al-Qummi, Sh. 'Abbas: Safinatu 'l-bihar, vol. ۲, pp. ۳۵۹-۶۰

Does reason and Divine Law demand the existence of any qualifications and conditions in ?an Imam and caliph? If so, what are they

Did the Prophet of Islam appoint anyone as his caliph and successor or not? If he did so, .۴ ?who was it? If not, why

After the Prophet's death, who was recognized to be his caliph and did he possess the .۵ (qualifications necessary for a caliph?(۱

Basic Difference .۳

It will save time if we explain at the outset the basic cause of the differences concerning the nature and character of the Imamate and caliphate. What is the primary characteristic of the Imamate? Is an Imam, first and foremost, the ruler of a kingdom? Or ?is he, first and foremost, the representative of Allah and vicegerent of the Prophet

As the Imamate and caliphate is generally accepted as the successorship of the Prophet, the above questions cannot be answered until a decision is made on the basic characteristics of a prophet. We must decide whether a prophet is, first and foremost, the .ruler of a kingdom or the representative of Allah

We find in the history of Islam a group which viewed the mission of the Holy Prophet as an attempt to establish a kingdom. Their outlook was material; their ideals were wealth, .beauty and power

They, naturally, ascribed the same motives to the Holy Prophet. 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan, was sent to the Holy Prophet to convey the message of the Quraysh: "Muhammad! If you desire power and prestige, we

.Najmu 'l-Hasan: an-Nubuwwah wa 'l-khilafah, tr. Liqa' 'Ali Haydari, pp. ۲ ۳ -۱

will make you the overlord of Mecca. Do you desire marriage into a noble family? You may have the hand of the fairest maiden in the land. Do you desire hoards of silver and gold? We can provide you with all these and even more. But you must forsake these nefarious preachings which imply that our forefathers who worshipped these dieties of ours were ."fools

The Quraysh were almost certain that Muhammad (S) would respond favourably to this offer. But the Holy Prophet recited surah ۴١ in reply which, inter alia, contained the :following warning

But if they turn away, then say: "I have warned you of a thunderbolt (of punishment) like (the thunderbolt of the 'Ad and the Thamud " (۴١: ١٣

Utbah was overwhelmed by this clear warning. He did not accept Islam, but advised the' Quraysh to leave Muhammad (S) alone to see how he could fare with other tribes. The (Quraysh claimed that he was also bewitched by Muhammad (S)(١

Thus he wanted to leave Muhammad (S) to other tribes. On the other hand when the Prophet immigrated to Medina and the Quraysh waged war upon war, the other tribes thought it advisable to leave Muhammad (S) to his own tribe. 'Amr ibn Salamah, a companion of the Prophet, states: "The Arabs were waiting for the Quraysh to accept Islam. They used to say that Muhammad (S) should be left to his own people. If he would emerge victorious over them, he was undoubtedly a true prophet. When Mecca was

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.Ibn Hisham: as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah, vol.l, pp. ٣١٣ -۴ -١

(conquered, all the tribes hastened to accept Islam."(۱

Thus according to them, victory was the criterion of truth! If Muhammad (S) would have !been defeated, he would have been considered a liar

The view that his sacred mission was nothing but a worldly affair was repeatedly announced by Abu Sufyan and his clan. At the time of the fall of Mecca, Abu Sufyan left Mecca to discern the strength of the Muslim army. He was seen by the uncle of the Prophet, 'Abbas, who took him to the Holy Prophet and advised the Prophet that he be .given protection and shown respect, in order that he may accept Islam

To summarize the event, 'Abbas took Abu Sufyan for a review of the Islamic army. He pointed out to Abu Sufyan eminent personalities from every clan who were present in the army. In the meantime, the Holy Prophet passed with his group which was in green uniform. Abu Sufyan cried out: "O ‘Abbas! Verily your nephew has acquired quite a (kingdom! “‘Abbas said: "Woe unto thee! This is not kingship; this is Prophethood".(۲

Here we see two opposing views in clear contrast. Abu Sufyan never changed his views. When 'Uthman became caliph, Abu Sufyan came to him and advised: "O Children of Umayyah! Now that this kingdom has come to you, play with it as the children play with a ball, and pass it from one to another in your clan. This kingdom is a reality; we do not know whether there is a paradise

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.al-Bukhari: as-Sahih, vol. ۵, p. ۱۹۱; Ibn Kathir: al-Bidayah wa 'n-nihayah, vol. ۵,p. ۴۰ -۱

.Abu'l-Fida': al-Mukhtasar, vol.۱, pp ۱۴۳-۴; alYa'qubi: at-Tarikh, vol. ۲, p. ۵۹ -۲

(or hell or not."(۱)

Then he went to Uhud and kicked at the grave of Hamzah (the uncle of the Prophet) and said: "O Abu Ya'la! See that the kingdom which you fought against has at last come to (us."(۲)

The same views were inherited by his grandson, Yazid, who said: Banu Hashim staged a play to obtain the kingdom; actually, there was neither any news (from Allah) nor any (revelation.(۳)

If that is the view held by any Muslim, then he is bound to equate the Imamate with rulership. According to such thinking, the primary function of the Prophet was kingship, and, therefore, anyone holding the reins of power was the rightful successor of the Holy .Prophet

But the problem arises in-that more than ninety per cent of the prophets did not have political power; and most of them were persecuted and apparently helpless victims of the political powers of their times. Their glory was not of crown and throne; it was of martyrdom and suffering. If the primary characteristic of prophethood is political power and rulership, then perhaps not even ۵۰ (out of ۱۲۴,۰۰۰) prophets would retain their divine .title of nabiyy

Thus it is crystal-clear that the main characteristic of the Holy Prophet was not that he had any political power, but that he was the Representative of Allah. And that representation was not bestowed on him by his people; it was given to him by Allah .Himself

Likewise, his successor's chief characteristic cannot be political power; but the fact that he was

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Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr: al-Isti'ab, vol. ۴, p.۱۶۷۹; Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid quotes the last sentence as - ۱ follows: "By him in whose name Abu Sufyan swears, there is neither punishment nor reckoning, neither Garden nor Fire, neither Resurrection nor Day of Judgment." (Vide his (.Sharh Nahji 'l-balaghah, vol. ۹, p. ۵۳

.Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid: op. cit., vol. ١۶, p. ١٣۶ -٢

Sibt ibn al Jawzi: 'Tadhkirah, ed. S. M. S. Bahru 'l 'Ulum, p. ٢۶١; at-Tabari, at-Tarikh, -٣
.vol.١٣, p. ٢١٧۴

the Representative of Allah. And that representation can never be bestowed upon anyone by his people; it must come from Allah Himself. In short, if an Imam is to represent Allah, he must be appointed by Allah.

System of Islamic Leadership .۴

There was a time when monarchy was the only system of government known to the people. At that time the Muslim scholars used to glorify monarchs and monarchy by saying, the king is the shadow of Allah, as though Allah has a shadow!

Now in modern times democracy is in vogue and the Sunni scholars are never tired of asserting in hundreds and thousands of articles, books and treatises that the Islamic system of government is based upon democracy. They even go so far as to claim that democracy was established by Islam, forgetting the city-republics of Greece. In the second half of this century, socialism and communism are gaining hold of the undeveloped and developing countries; and I am not surprised to hear from many well-meaning Muslim scholars tirelessly asserting that Islam teaches and creates socialism. Some people in Pakistan and elsewhere have invented the slogan of 'Islamic socialism'. What this 'Islamic socialism' means, I do not know. But I would not be surprised if within ten or twenty years these very people start claiming that Islam teaches communism!

All this 'changing with the wind' is making a mockery of the Islamic system of leadership. Some time ago in a gathering of Muslims in an African country, in which the president of the country was

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the guest of honour, a Muslim leader stated that Islam taught to 'Obey Allah, obey the Apostle and your rulers'. In his reply, the president (who incidentally, was a staunch Roman Catholic) said that he appreciated very much the wisdom of the commandment to obey Allah and the Apostle of Allah; but he could not understand the logic behind the order to obey 'your rulers'. What if a ruler is unjust and a tyrant'! Does Islam enjoin ?Muslims to obey him passively without resistance

This intelligent question demands an intelligent reply. It cannot be regarded lightly. The fact is that the person, who invited that criticism, did so because of his misinterpretation .of the Holy Qur'an

Let us examine the system of Islamic leadership. Is it democratic? The best definition of democracy was given by Abraham Lincoln when he said that democracy was "the ".government of the people, by the people and for the people

But in Islam it is not the government 'of the people'; it is the 'government of Allah'. How do people govern themselves? They govern themselves by making their own laws; in Islam laws are made not by the people, but by Allah; these laws are promulgated not by the consent and decree of the people, but by the Prophet, by the command of Allah. The people have no say in legislation; they are required to follow, not to make any comment :or suggestion about those laws and legislations

And it is not for a believer man or believer woman

to have any choice in their affair when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter. . . .((۳۳:۳۶

Coming to the phrase 'by the people', let us now consider how people govern themselves. They do so by electing their own rulers. The Holy Prophet, who was the supreme executive, judicial and overall authority of the Islamic government, was not elected by the people. In fact, had the people of Mecca been allowed to exercise their choice they would have elected either 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud (of at-Ta'if) or al Walid ibn al-Mughirah (of :Mecca) as the prophet of Allah! According to the Qur'an

And they say: "Why was not this Qur'an revealed to a man of importance in the two (towns?" (۴۳ :۳۱)(۱)

So not only was the Supreme Head of the Islamic State appointed without the consultation of the people, but in fact it was done against their expressed wishes. The Holy Prophet is the highest authority of Islam: he combines in his person all the functions of legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government; and he was not elected .by the people

So Islam is neither the government of the people nor by the people. There is no legislation .by the people; and the executive and judiciary is not responsible to the people

Nor is it, for that matter, a government 'for the people'. The Islamic system, from the beginning to the end, is 'for Allah'. Everything must be done 'for Allah'; if it is done 'for the people', it

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۱ - For the explanation of "a man of importance", see, as-Suyuti: Lubabu u'n-nuqul fi .asbabi'n-nuzul printed with Tafsiru 'l-jalalayn, pp. ۲۸۹, ۶۴۹

is termed 'hidden polytheism'. Whatever you do-whether it is prayer or charity, social senice or family function, obedience to parents or love of neighbour, leading in prayer or deciding a case, entering into war or concluding a peace-must be done with "qurbatan ila'llah", to become nearer to Allah, to gain the pleasure of Allah. In Islam; everything is .for Allah

In short, the Islamic form of government is the government of Allah, by the .representative of Allah, to gain the pleasure of Allah

And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship me .((۵۱:۵۶

It is theocracy, and it is the nature and characteristic of Islamic leadership. And how it affects the meaning of the above verse concerning 'obedience' shall be seen in later .chapters

Part ٢: The Shi'ite Point of View

The Necessity of Imamate and the Qualifications of an Imam .۵

A. Necessity of Imamate

From the Shi'ite point of view, the institution of Imamate is necessary, according to reason. It is lutf (grace) of Allah which brings the creature towards obedience and keeps .him away from disobedience, without compelling the creature in any way

It has been proved in the Shi'ite theology that lutf is incumbent on Allah. When Allah orders that man to do something yet is aware that man cannot do it or that it is very difficult without His assistance, then if Allah does not provide this assistance, He would be contradicting His own aim. Obviously, such negligence is evil according to reason. .Therefore lutf is incumbent on Allah

)Imamate is a lutf, because as we know when men have a chief (ra'is

and guide (murshid) whom they obey, who avenges the oppressed of their oppressor and restrains the oppressor, then they draw nearer to righteousness and depart from .corruption

And because it is a lutf, it is incumbent on Allah to appoint an Imam to guide and lead the (ummah after the Prophet.(۱

(B. Superiority (afdaliyyah

The Shi'ahs believe that, like the Prophet, an Imam should excel the ummah in all virtues, such as knowledge, bravery, piety and charity, and should possess complete knowledge of the Divine Law. If he does not, and this high post is entrusted to a less perfect person when a more perfect one is available, the inferior will have been given preference over the superior, which is wrong in reason and against Divine Justice. Therefore, no inferior (person may receive Imamate from Allah when there exists a person superior to him.(۲

C. Infallibility

The second qualification is 'ismah (infallibility). If the Imam is not infallible (ma'sum) he (would be liable to err and also deceive others.(۳

Firstly, in such a case, no implicit confidence may be placed in what he says and dictates .to us

Secondly, an Imam is the ruler and head of the ummah and the ummah should follow him unreservedly in every matter. Now, if he commits a sin the people would be bound to follow him in that sin as well. The undeniability of such a position is self-evident; for obedience in sin is evil, unlawful and forbidden. Moreover, it would mean that he should be obeyed and disobeyed at

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۱- .al-'Allamah al-Hilli: al-Babu 'l-hadi 'ashar, Eng. tr W.M. Miller, pp. ۵۰, ۶۲-۴

۲- .Ibid. p.۶۹

۳- .Ibidpp.۶۴-۸

one and the same time; that is, obedience to him would be obligatory yet forbidden, .which is manifestly absurd

Thirdly, if it would be possible for an Imam to commit sin it would be the duty of other people to prevent him from doing so (because it is obligatory on every Muslim to forbid other people from unlawful acts). In such a case, the Imam will be held in contempt; his prestige will come to-an end and instead of being the leader of the ummah he will .become their follower, and his Imamate will be of no use

Fourthly, the Imam is the defender of the Divine Law and this work cannot be entrusted to fallible hands nor can any such person maintain it properly. For this very reason, infallibility has been admitted to be an indispensable condition to prophethood; and the considerations which make it essential in the case of a prophet make it so in the case of .an Imam and caliph as well

.(More will be said on this subject in Chapter ١٣ (Ulu '١Amr Must Be Ma'sum

D. Appointment by Allah

point

As in the case of the prophets, the above-mentioned qualifications alone are not enough to automatically make one an Imam. Imamate is not an acquired job; it is a 'designation' (bestowed by Allah. (١)

It is for this reason that the Shi'ah Ithna 'Asharis (The Twelvers) believe that only Allah can appoint a successor to the Prophet; that the ummah has no choice in this matter-its only duty is to follow such a divinely-appointed

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.Ibid., p. ٦٨ -١

.Imam or caliph

.The Sunnis, on the other hand, believe that it is the duty of the ummah to appoint a caliph

Verses of the Qur'an

:The following verses of the Qur'an confirm the views held by the Shi'ahs

And thy Lord creates what He wills and chooses; they have no right to choose; glory be to .(Allah, and exalted be He above what they associate! (٢٨:۶٨

This clearly shows that man has no right to make any selection; it lies entirely in the hands .of Allah

:Before creating Adam (as), Allah informed the angels

.(Verily I am going to make a caliph in the earth ". . . (٢: ٣٠ ..."

And when the angels demurred politely at the scheme, their protest was brushed aside by a curt reply: "Surely I know what you know not" (ibid.). If the ma'sum (infallible) angels were given no say in the appointment of a caliph, how can fallible humans expect to take ?the whole authority of such an appointment in their own hands

-Allah Himself appointed Prophet Dawud (as) as caliph on the earth

(O Dawud ! Verily; We have made thee (Our) caliph on the earth ..." (٣٨:٢۶"

In every case Allah attributes the appointment of the caliph or the Imam exclusively to .Himself

:(Likewise, the call went to Prophet Ibrahim (as

Allah) said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men." (Ibrahim) said: "And of my) (offspring?" He said: "My covenant will not include the unjust. " (٢ : ١٢۴

This verse leads us to the correct answers of many important questions concerning

.Imamate

a. Allah said: "Surely I am going to make you an Imam for men. " This shows that .Imamate is a divinely-appointed status; it is beyond the jurisdiction of the ummah

b. "My covenant will not include the unjust." This clearly says that a non-ma'sum cannot :be an Imam. Logically, we may divide mankind into four groups

;Those who remain unjust throughout their lives .۱

;those who are never unjust .۲

those who are unjust early in their lives but later become just; and .۳

.those who are just early in their lives but later become unjust .۴

Ibrahim (as) had too high a position to request Imamate for the first or the fourth group. This leaves two groups (the second and the third) which could be included in the prayer. However, Allah rejects one of them; i. e., those who are unjust early in their lives but later become just. Now there remains only one group which can qualify for Imamate -those .who are never unjust throughout their lives, i.e., ma'sum

c. The literal translation of the last sentence is as follows: My covenant will not reach the unjust. Note that Allah did not say, the unjust will not reach My covenant, because it would have implied that it was within the power of man-albeit a just one-to attain the status of Imamate. The present sentence does not leave room for any such misunderstanding; it cleary shows that receiving Imamate is not within human jurisdiction; it is exclusively in the hands of Allah and He gives

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.it to whom He pleases

:Then as a general rule, it is stated

(And We made them Imams who were to guide by Our command ... (۲۱:۷۳

When Prophet Musa (as) wanted a vizier to help him with his responsibilities, he did not appoint someone by his own authority. He prayed to Allah: "And make for me a vizier from :my family, Harun (Aaron) my brother" (۲۰:۲۹-۳۰). And Allah said

.(You are indeed granted your petition, O Musa!" (ibid., ۳۶"

That Divine selection is made known to the ummah through the prophet or the preceding Imam. This declaration is called nass (specification; determination; designation of the succeeding Imam by the prophet or preceding Imam). An Imam according to Shi'ite .belief, must be mansus min Allah, i.e., designated by Allah for that status

E. Miracles

point

If one has not heard nass about a claimant of Imamate, then the only way of ascertaining (the truth is through a miracle (mu'jizah). (۱

Generally speaking any man may claim that he is an Imam or a prophet's caliph and infallible, but a miracle is the only unfailing test of truth in such cases. If the claimant proves a miracle also in support of his claim, it would be admissible without hesitation. If he fails to do so, it is evident that he does not possess the qualifications required for .Imamate and caliphate, and his claim would therefore be false

Precedent

The universal practice of prophets had been to nominate their successors (on the .command of Allah) without any interference from the ummah

The history of these

١- Ibid., p. ۶٩.

prophets does not offer a single instance of a prophet's successor being elected by a voting of his followers. There is no reason why in the case of the successor of the last :Prophet this established Divine Law should be changed. Allah says

.(And you shall never find a change in divine practice (۳۳:۶۲

Logical Reasons

The same reasons which prove that the appointment of a prophet is a divine . ۱ prerogative prove with equal force that the successor of that prophet should also be appointed by Allah. An Imam or Caliph, like the prophet, is appointed to carry on the work of Allah; he must be responsible to Allah. If he is appointed by the people, his first loyalty will be not for Allah, but for the people who would be 'the basis of his authority'. He will always try to please people, because if they were to withdraw their confidence in him he would lose his position. So he will not discharge the duties of religion without fear or favour; his eyes will always be on political considerations. Thus the work of Allah will .suffer

And the history of Islam provides ample evidence of glaring disregard for the tenets of religion shown by man-appointed caliph's right from the beginning. So this argument is .not just academic; there is solid historical evidence behind it

Also, only Allah knows the inner feelings and thoughts of man; no one else can ever . ۲ know the true nature of another person. Perhaps someone may pose as a

pious and god-fearing man merely to impress his Colleagues and gain some worldly benefit. Such examples are not rare in history. Take, for example, the case of 'Abdu 'l Malik ibn Marwan who used to spend all his time in the mosque in prayer and recitation of the Qur an. He was reciting the Qur'an when news reached him of the death of his father and that people were waiting to pledge their allegiance to him. He closed the Qur'an and (said: "This is the parting between me and thee".(۱

Therefore, as the existence of qualifications which are necessary for an Imam or Caliph .can only truly be known to Allah, it is only Allah Who can appoint an Imam or Caliph

Infalability of the Imams .۶

Now, let us note what the Qur'an says about the Ahl u'l-bayt (family members) of the Holy .Prophet

According to the Qur'an, the following persons were sinless and infallible at the time of the death of the Holy Prophet 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn. The verse of purity (tathir) :reads as follows

Allah only desires to keep away abomination from you, O People of the House! And to ... (purify you a (thorough) purifying. (۳۳ :۳۳

It is universally agreed that the above-named four persons are 'People of the House' and .are sinless and free from all kinds of abomination

The sentences before and after this verse are addressed to the wives the Holy Prophet and the pronouns therein are of feminine gender; but the pronouns in this verse are of .masculine gender

p: ۱۸

.as-Suyuti: Tari'khu 'l-khulafa, p.۲۱۷ -۱

The reason why this verse has been placed in its present position is not difficult to guess. The late renowned scholar 'Allamah Puya writes in footnote no. ١٨٥٧ of the translation of :the Holy Qur'an by S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali

The portion of this verse relating to the divinely effected purity of the Holy Ahl u'l bayt-" needs a proper explanation commenting with reference to its correct context. This portion of this verse is a separate ayah or verse by itself revealed separately on particular occasions but placed here as it deals with the wives of the Holy Prophet. The location of this verse here if studied properly makes it obvious that it has its own significant and important purpose behind it. While the address in the beginning of the verse is in the feminine gender-there is the transition here in the address from the feminine to the masculine gender. While referring to the consorts of the Holy Prophet, the pronouns also are consistently feminine. For a mixed assembly of men and women, generally the masculine gender is used. This transition in the grammatical use of the language, makes it quite obvious that this clause is quite a different matter used for a different group other than the previous one, and has been suitably placed here to show a comparative position of the Ahlu 'l-bayt in contrast to the wives of the Holy Prophet. 'Amr :ibn Abi Salamah who was brought up by the Holy Prophet relates

When this verse was revealed'"

p: ١٩

the Holy Prophet was in the house of Umm Salamah. At the revelation of (the verse): Verily willeth God to keep away impurity from you O People of the House! and He purifieth you with the perfect purification, the Holy Prophet assembled his daughter Fatimah, her sons Hasan and Husayn and her husband, his cousin, 'A١i, and covered the group, including himself, with his own mantle and addressing God said: "O God! These constitute my progeny! Keep them away from every kind of impurity, purified with perfect purification". Umm Salamah, the righteous wife of the Holy Prophet, witnessing this marvellous occasion, humbly submitted to the Holy Prophet, "O Apostle of God! May I also join the group? "to which the Holy Prophet replied, "No, remain thou in thine own place, (thou art in goodness"". (١)

This is not the place to name the countless references concerning this verse; still, I would like to quote Mawlana Wahidu'z-Zaman, the famous Sunni scholar, whose translation and commentary of the Qur'an as well as his book Anwaru'l-lughah (a dictionary of the Qur'an and ahadith) are among the recognized references. He writes in his commentary of the Qur'an about this verse: "Some people think that it is especially for those family members who had b١ood relation with the Prophet, i.e., 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn. The present translator says that the traditions which are correct (sahih) and well-connected up to the Prophet, support the same view, because when the Prophet himself has declared that his family

p: ٢٠

١- Holy Qur'an, Eng . tr. S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, fn. ١٨٥٧, p.l٢۶١

members are only these, then to accept it and believe in it becomes obligatory. And one more sign of correctness of this view is that the pronouns used before and after this (verse are those for females, while in this verse are those for males . . ."(۱

Again he says in his Anwaru 'l-lughah: "The correct view is that in this verse of purity only these five persons are included (i.e., the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn), although in Arabic usage, the word ahlu 'l-bayt is used for wives also. Some people prove by this verse that these five persons were sinless and ma'sum (infallible). But if not ma'sum, then of course they were surely mahfuz (protected from committing any sin or (error)." (۲

I have quoted these two references to show that not only the Ithna'Asharis but the learned Sunni scholars also confirm that, according to the rules of Arabic grammer and according to the correct unbroken traditions of the Prophet, only 'A۱i, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn are induded in this verse, besides the Prophet himself. Also, it is clear that the view that these persons were sinless is shared by Sunni scholars too. It is apparent that in the least they say that if they were not infallible (theoretically) they were surely protected .(from sin and error (practically

There are many other verses and traditions testifying to the purity ('ismah) of the Ahlu '۱bayt, but the limitation of space does not allow me to enumerate them even

p: ۲۱

Wahidu 'z-Zaman: Tafsir Wahidi (on the margin of the Qur'an's translation by the same -۱ .author), para.۲۲fn.۷,p.۵۴۹

.Wahidu'z-Zaman: Anwaru 'l-lughah, para.۲۲,P.۵۱ -۲

.briefly

(Superiority of 'Ali (as .۷

Afdaliyyah (superiority) in Islam means "to deserve more reward (thawab) before Allah ".because of good deeds

All Muslims agree that this ' superiority ' cannot be decided by our own views or outlook and that there is no way to know it except through the Qur'an or hadith. al-Ghazzali, the famous Sunni scholar, has written: "The reality of superiority is what is before Allah; and (that is something which cannot be known except to the Holy Prophet."(۱

Most of our Sunni brethren believe that superiority was according to the sequence of the .caliphate; i.e., Abu Bakr was more superior, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'A۱i

But this belief is not based on any proof, nor was it the belief of all the Sunnis of early days. During the time of the Holy Prophet, we find that such respected Companions as Salman al-Farisi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Miqdad al-Kindi, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, Jabir ibn 'Abdillah al-Ansari, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Zayd ibn Arqam and many others believed that 'Ali (as) was the most superior amongst all the Ahlu 'l-bayt and the Companions. (۲)۲۱

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was once asked by his son about his views on the subject of superiority. He said: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar and 'Uthman." His son asked: "And what about 'Ali ibn Abi Talib? " He replied: "He is from the Ahlu '۱bayt. Others cannot be compared (with him."(۳

Ubaydullah Amritsari writes in his famous book Arjahu 'l-matalib: "As superiority means' 'having more thawab', its

p: ۲۲

.al-Ghazzali: Ihya' 'ulumi 'd-din, vol. I, pt.۲, p. ۱۰ -۱

.Ibn Abdi 'l-Barr:al-Isti'ab, vol.۲, p.۴۷۰ -۲

.al-Qunduzi: Yanabi'u 'l -mawaddah, p. ۲۵۳ -۳

proof can only be known from the ahadith (traditions) of the Holy Prophet. .. and if there are conflicting traditions, then the authentic traditions should be accepted and strong .traditions should be differentiated from the weak ones

al-'Allamah Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr writes in his book al-Isti'ab(١) concerning the ahadith which" have been narrated about the superiority of Amiru 'l-mu'minin, 'A١i that: 'Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Qadi Isma'il ibn Ishaq, Imam Ahmad ibn 'Ali ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasa'i and al-Hafiz Abu 'Ali an-Naysaburi have said:(٢) "There have not come as many ahadith with good chains of narrators (asnad) about virtues of any of the Companions as have been . ("narrated on the virtues of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as

Furthermore, if we look at the exclusive virtues of Amir u'l-mu'minin, 'Ali (as) and think" about those things which caused him to reap great rewards before Allah, we will have to admit that only he was the most superior after the Holy Prophet." (٣)٢۵

The author himself was a Sunni, and he has discussed this matter in detail in Chapter ٣, .pages ١٠٣-۵١۶, of the above-mentioned book

Obviously, I cannot provide here even a short list of the verses and traditions concerning the afdaliyyah of 'A١i (as). It will suffice to say that there are at least ٨۶ verses in the Qur'an extolling the virtues of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) and the traditions on this subject .cannot be counted

Thus, it should be obvious even to the casual observer that 'Ali (as) was the most superior

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.Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr: al-Isti'ab, vol. ٣, p. ١١١۵ -١

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami: Sawa'iqu 'l-muhriqah, p.٧٢ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani: Fathu 'l-bari, -٢ .vol. ٨, p.٧١

.Amritsari, Arjahu 'l -matalib, p. ١١٢ -٣

.of the Muslims after the Holy Prophet

(Appointment of Ali (as .٨

After giving a short account of 'ismah and afdaliyyah of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), now comes .the most important question of his appointment by Allah

On several occasions the Holy Prophet had declared that 'Ali (as) was to be his successor .and caliph

It is a fact that the first open declaration of the prophethood was the very occasion when the first open declaration of 'Ali's caliphate was made. It was at the time of the "Feast of ."the Clan

When the verse: "And warn thy nearest relations (٢۶:٢١۴), was revealed, the Prophet ordered 'Ali to prepare food and invite the sons of 'Abdu'l-Muttalib so that he could convey to them the words of Allah. After the feast, the Prophet intended to talk to them, but Abu Lahab interfered by saying:"Verily, your comrade has entranced you". Upon .hearing this statement all of them dispersed

The next day, the Messenger of Allah again called them for a feast. After they had finished with their food, the Prophet addressed them: "O sons of 'Abdul'l-Muttalib, I have brought for you the good of this world and the next, and I have been appointed by the Lord to call you unto Him. Therefore, who amongst you will administer this cause for me and be my brother, my successor and my caliph?" No one responded to the Prophet's call except 'Ali who was the youngest of the congregation. The Prophet then patted 'Ali's neck and said: "O my people! This 'A١i is

p: ٢۴

my brother, my successor and my caliph amongst you. Listen to him and obey him." (۱)۲۶

It is interesting to note here that the Leiden edition (۱۸۷۹ A.D., p. ۱۱۷۳) of at-Tarikh of at Tabari records the words of the Holy Prophet as "wasiyyi wa khalifati" (my successor and my caliph); but in the Cairo edition of ۱۹۶۳ A.D., (which claims to be checked with the Leiden edition) these important words have been changed to "kadha wa kadha" (so-and-so) ! How sad it is to see the academic world sacrificing its honesty and integrity on the !altar of political expediency

(Verses of mastership (wilayah .۹

After that, on many occasions, many verses and traditions reminded the Muslims that 'Ali :was their master after the Holy Prophet. One of the most important verse is as follows

Verily, your Master is only Allah and His Apostle and those who believe, those who . (establish prayers, and pay the zakat while bowed (in worship) (۵:۵۵

The Muslim scholars, Sunni and Shi'ah alike, agree that this verse was revealed in honour of Imam 'Ali (as). It clearly shows that there are only three masters of the believers. .(Firstly, Allah secondly, His Prophet and thirdly, 'Ali (with the eleven succeeding Imams

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari says that one day he was praying with the Prophet when a beggar came to the Prophet's mosque. No one responded to his pleas. The beggar raised his hands towards heavens and said, "Allah! be a witness that I came to Thy Prophet's mosque and no one gave me anything". 'Ali

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Ibnu 'l-Athir: al-Kamil, [vol.۵, pp. ۶۲-۳]; al Baghawi: at-Tafsir, [vol. ۴, p.۱۲۷]; al-Khazin: at- -۱ Tafsir, [vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۷]; al-Bayhaqi: Dala 'ilu 'n-nubuwwah [vol. I, pp.۴۲۸-۳۰]; as-Suyuti: ad-Durru 'l-manthur [vol.۵, p.۹۷]; al-Muttaqi al-Hindi: Kanzu 'l-'ummal [vol.۱۵, pp .۱۰۰,۱۱۳,۱۱۵-۷]; Abu 'l -Fida': al -Mukhtasar, [vol. I, pp .۱۱۶-۷]; at -Tabari: at Tarikh, [vol. I pp .۱۷۱-۳]; Carlyle , T.: On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History, [p.۵۴]; Gibbon, E.: The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, [vol. ۳, p. ۹۴]; Davenport, J.: An Apology for Muhammed and the Koran [p.۲۱]; Irving, W.: Mahommet and His Successors [p.۴۵]. (For further details, see al-([Amini: al-Ghadir [vol.۲,pp.۲۷۸۸۹

as) was bowing in ruku' at that time. He pointed his little finger, on which was a ring,) towards the beggar who came forward and took away the ring. This incident occurred in the Prophet's presence who raised his face towards heaven and prayed: "O Lord! my brother Musa had begged of Thee to open his breast and to make his work easy for him, to loose the knot of his tongue so that people might understand him, and to appoint from among his relations his brother, as his vizier, and to strengthen his back with Harun and to make Harun his partner in his work. O Allah! Thou said to Musa, 'We will strengthen thy arm with thy brother. No one will now have an access to either of you!' O Allah! I am Muhammad and Thou hast given me distinction. Open my breast for me, make my work easy for me, and from my family appoint my brother 'Ali as my vizier. Strengthen my back with him". The Prophet had not yet finished his prayers when Jibril brought the above quoted verse. (١)٢٧

Here is not the place to give all the references of this hadith. (They run in the hundreds.) This verse and the prayer of the Prophet jointly and separately show that 'A١i (as) was .designated to be the Master of the Muslims after the Holy Prophet

The formal declaration of Ghadir Khum .١٠

point

All the previous declarations may be classified as a prelude to the formal declaration of .Ghadir Khumm

This event has been unanimously

p: ٢۶

١- See [at-Tabari; at-Tafsir, vol. ۶, p. ١٨۶]; as-Suyuti: ad-Durru 'l-manthur, [vol. ٢,,, pp. ٢٩٣-۴]; ar-Razi: at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir, [vol.١٢, p. ٢۶]; az-Zamakhshari: at-Tafsir (al-Kashshaf), vol.l, [p.۶۴٩; [al-Jassas: Ahkamu 'l-Qur'an, vol. ٢, pp.۵۴٢-٣; al-Khazin: at-Tafsir, vol. ٢, p. ۶٨

described by the learned historians and scholars of both sects. Here we give a brief account to show what great arrangements were made to declare 'Ali as the successor to .the Holy Prophet

Ghadir Khumm lies in Juhfa between Mecca and Medina. When the Prophet was on his way home, after performing his last pilgrimage, Jibril brought him this urgent command of :Allah

O Apostle! Deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message (at all); and Allah will protect you from the (people . . . (۵ :۶۷

The Prophet stopped at once and ordered that all people who had gone ahead should be called back, and he waited for those who were following. When the entire caravan had gathered, a pulpit was set up by piling up camel saddles; the acacia thorns were swept away. The Prophet ascended the pulpit and delivered a long sermon. The day was very hot; people had to stretch their cloaks under their feet and over their heads. The Prophet addressed them as follows: O you people! Know it well that Jibril came down to me several times bringing me orders from the Lord, the Merciful, that I should halt at this place and inform every man, white and black, that 'Ali, the son of Abu Talib, is my brother and my wasiyy (successor) and my caliph, and the Imam after me. His position to me is like that of Harun

p: ۲۷

to Musa, except that there is to be no prophet after me, and he is your master next to .Allah and His Prophet

O you people! Verily, Allah has appointed him to be your Imam and ruler. Obedience to him is obligatory alike on all the muhajirun (Emigrants) and ansar (Helpers) and on those who follow them in virtue, and on the dwellers in cities and the nomads, the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the freeman and the slave, the young and the old, the great and the small, the white and the black. His command is to be obeyed; his word is binding and his orders obligatory on everyone believing in the One God. Cursed is the man who disobeys him and .blessed is he who follows him, and he who believes in him is a true believer

O you people! This is the last time I shall stand in this assembly. Therefore, listen and obey and surrender to the command of your Lord. Verily, Allah, He is your Lord and God; then after Him, His Prophet, Muhammad, who is addressing you, is your Master, then after me 'Ali is your Master and your Imam, according to Allah's command. Then after him the Imamate will continue through my descendants begotten by him till the day you meet Allah and His Prophet. O you people! Meditate on the Qur'an and understand its verses; .reflect over its clear verses and do not go to the ambiguous ones

For, by Allah, none will properly explain

p: ۲۸

to you its warnings and expound to you its meanings except ,this man (i.e.,'Ali) whose hand I am lifting up in front of myself. And I say unto you that whoever whose Master I am, 'Ali is his Master; and he is 'Ali, the son of Abu Talib, my brother and wasiyy (successor); and wilayah (obedience to him and love for him) has been made obligatory .by Allah, the Powerful, the Exalted

The other Imams have also been briefly referred to in this address; and they are mentioned in precise detail in many other traditions. For example, on one occasion addressing Imam Husayn the Prophet said: "You arean Imam, the son of an Imam, the brother of an Imam, nine of your lineal descendants will be pious Imams; the ninth of them being their Qa'im (he who will rise)." (۱)۲۸

Even a casual observer would not fail to realize that, it was a matter of vital importance to Islam and that is why the Prophet, under the Divine Command, made all the possible preparations to accomplish it. Exposed to the scorching rays of the midday sun, he .mounted the pulpit to make the important pronouncement

First of all, he informed the audience of his approaching end and then called them to witness that he had faithfully discharged his duties. Then he asked them: "Do I not have more authority upon you than you yourselves have. All of them cried out that he certainly had more right on them than they themselves had. The

p: ۲۹

.[al-Qunduzi: Yanabi'u 'l-mawaddah, [p.۱۶۸; Amritsari: Arjahu 'l-matalib, p.۴۴۸ -۱

Prophet then said: "Whoever whose Master I am, 'Ali is his Master." In the end he invoked blessings on 'Ali, saying: "O Allah! Love him who loves 'Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy ."of 'Ali; help him who helps 'Ali, and forsake him who forsakes 'Ali

:When the ceremony was over, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed

This day I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My bounty upon you .(and I have approved Islam as your religion (۵:۳

This Divine Communication clearly shows that because of 'Ali's appointment to thee Imamate the religion was perfected, the bounty; and favour of Allah completed, and Islam approved by Allah. On the arrival of this glad tiding from heaven the believers congratulated 'Ali in the Prophet's presence and many poets composed poems on this event. All these facts stand recorded in books of tradition as will be seen in the following .pages

Hadith of Ghadir: Mutawatir

The following extracts (taken from authentic Sunni books) from the said lecture (khutbah) :of the Holy Prophet are very important

I am leaving behind, among you, two most precious things. . . (۱) the Book of Allah . . . and (۲) my descendants who are my family members. They will not separate from each other until they come to me near Kawthar (a pool in Paradise). Verily Allah is my Master and I :am the Master of every believer. Then he took the hand of 'Ali and said

.Whoever whose Master I am, 'Ali is his Master

These

p: ۳۰

two traditions are referred to as the traditions of 'Two Precious Things' (Thaqalayn) and .Mastership' (Wilayah) . They are singly and Jointly narrated by hundreds of traditionalists

Nawwab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, says: "al-Hakim Abu Sa'id says that the tradition of 'Two Precious Things' and of 'whoever who's Master I am, 'Ali is his Master' are mutawatir (i.e., narrated unbrokenly by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about their authenticity), because a great number of the Companions of the Prophet have narrated them. So much so that Muhammad ibn Jarir has written these two traditions through seventy-five different chains (asnad); and he has written a separate book which he named Kitabu 'l-wilayah; and al-Hafiz adh-Dhahabi also has written a complete book on its asnad and has passed the verdict that it is mutawatir; and Abu 'l-'Abbas ibn 'Uqdah has narrated the hadith of Ghadir Khumm through one hundred and fifty chains and has written a complete book on it." (۱)۲۹

Some writers have tried to cast doubt on the authenticity of the events of Ghadir Khumm. It is necessary to mention that this hadith is mutawatir, and the late renowned scholar al'Allamah al-Amini in the first volume of his celebrated book al-Ghadir has given (with full references) the names of ۱۱۰ famous Companions of the Holy Prophet who have narrated .this hadith. As an example, I am enumerating the names given under letter alif

;The years of ۱. Abu Layla al-Ansari (۳۷); ۲. Abu Zaynab ibn 'Awf al-Ansari

p: ۳۱

(.Siddiq Hasan Khan: Manhaju 'l-wusul, p.۱۳. death indicated in parentheses are in A. H -۱

Abu Fadalah al-Ansari (۳۸); ۴. Abu Qudamah al-Ansari; ۵. Abu 'Amrah ibn 'Amr ibn .۳ Mutassin al-Ansari; ۶. Abu 'l-Haytham ibn at-Tayyihan (۳۷); ۷. Abu Rafi' al-Qibti, slave of the Holy Prophet; ۸. Abu Dhuwayb Khuwaylid (or Khalid) ibn Khalid al-Hudhali; ۹. Usamah ibn Zayd ibn Harithah (۵۴); ۱۰. Ubayy ibn Ka'b al-Ansari (۳۰ or ۳۲); ۱۱. As'ad ibn Zurarah al Ansari; ۱۲. Asma' bint 'Umays; ۱۳. Umm Salamah, wife of the Holy Prophet; ۱۴. Umm Hani bint Abi Talib; ۱۵. Abu Hamzah Anas ibn Malik al-Ansari; ۱۶. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Quhafah; and ۱۷. Abu Hurayrah. (۱)۳۰

And there are not less than ۸۴ tabi'in (disciples of the Companions) who narrated this hadith from the above-mentioned Companions. Again, the list under letter alif is given :here as an example

Abu Rashid al-Hubrani ash-Shami, ۲. Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdi'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf; ۳. Abu .۱ Sulayman al-Mu'adhdhin; ۴. Abu Salih as-Samman, Dhakwan al-Madani; ۵. Abu 'Unfuwanah al-Mazini; ۶. Abu 'Abdi 'r-Rahim al-Kindi; ۷. Abu 'l Qasim, Asbagh ibn Nubatah at-Tamimi; ۸. Abu Layla al-Kindi; and ۹. Iyas ibn Nudhayr.(۲)۳۱

Traditionists have recorded this hadith in their books in every century and every era. For example, the names of those writers and scholars who have narrated this hadith in the :second century of hijrah are

Abu Muhammad, 'Amr ibn Dinar al-Jumahi al-Makki (۱۱۵ or ۱۱۶); ۲. Abu Bakr Muhammad .۱ ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaydillah al-Qurashi az Zuhri (۱۲۴); ۳. 'Abdu'r Rahman ibn Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr at-Taymi al-Madani (۱۲۶); ۴. Bakr ibn Sawadah ibn

p: ۳۲

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al -Amini: al -Ghadi'r, vol ۱, pp . ۱۴-۱۸ -۱

.Ibid.,pp.۶۲-۶۳ -۲

Thumamah, Abu Thumamah al-Basri (۱۲۸); ۵. 'Abdullah ibn Abi Najih, Yasar ath-Thaqafi, Abu Yasar al-Makki (۱۳۱); ۶. al-Hafiz Mughirah ibn Muqassim, Abu Hisham ad-Dabbi al-Kufi (۱۳۳); ۷. Abu 'Abdi'r-Rahim Khalid ibn Zayd al-Jurnahi al Misri (۱۳۹); ۸. Hasan ibn al-Hakam an-Nakha'i al-Kufi (ca. ۱۴۰); ۹. Idris ibn Yazid, Abu 'Abdillah al-Awd; al-Kufi; ۱۰. ;Yahya ibn Sa'id ibn Hayyan at-Taymi al-Kufi

al-Hafiz 'Abdu'l Malik ibn Abi Sulayman al-'Arzami al-Kufi (۱۴۵); ۱۲. 'Awf ibn Abi Jamilah .۱۱ al'Abdi al Hajar; al-Basri (۱۴۶); ۱۳. 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar ibn Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab al-'Adawi al-Madani (۱۴۷); ۱۴. Nu'aym ibn al Hakim al-Madayini (۱۴۸); ۱۵. Talhah ibn Yahya ibn Talkah ibn 'Ubaydillah at-Taymi al-Kufi (۱۴۸); ۱۶. Abu Mukammad Kathir ibn Zayd al-Aslami (ca. ۱۵۰); ۱۷. al-Hafiz Mukammad ibn Ishaq al-Madani (۱۵۱ or ۱۵۲); ۱۸. al-Hafiz Mu'ammar ibn Rashid, Abu 'Urwah al-Azdi al-Basri (۱۵۳ or ۱۵۴); ۱۹. al-Hafiz Mis'ar ibn Kidam ibn Zahir al-Hilali ar-Rawasi al-Kufi (۱۵۳ or ۱۵۴); ۲۰. Abu 'Isa Hakam ibn Aban al-(;'Adani (۱۵۴ or ۱۵۵

Abdullah ibn Shawdhab al Balkhi al-Basri (۱۵۷); ۲۲. al-Hafiz Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, Abu .'۲۱ Bistam al-Wasit; (۱۶۰); ۲۳. al Hafiz Abu'۱-'Ala', Kamil ibn al-'Ala' at-Tamimi al-Kufi (ca. ۱۶۰); ۲۴. al-Hafiz Sufyan ibn Sa'id ath-Thawri, Abu 'Abdillah al-Kufi (۱۶۱); ۲۵. al Hafiz. Isra'il ibn Yunus ibn Abi Ishaq as-Sabi'i Abu Yusuf al-Kufi (۱۶۲); ۲۶. Ja'far ibn Ziyad al-Kufi al-Ahmar (۱۶۵ or ۱۶۷); ۲۷. Muslim ibn Salim an-Nahdi, Abu Farwah al-Kufi; ۲۸. al Hafiz Qays ibn ar-Rabi', Abu Mukammad alAsadi al-Kufi (۱۶۵); ۲۹. al-Hafiz Hammad ibn

Salamah, Abu Salamah al-Basri (۱۶۷); ۳۰. al Hafiz 'Abdullah ibn Lahi'ah, Abu 'Abdi 'r-Rakman al-Misri (۱۷۴);

۳۱. al-Hafiz Abu 'Uwanah al-Waddak ibn 'Abdillah ai-Yashkuri al-Wasit; al-Bazzaz (۱۷۵ or ۱۷۶); ۳۲. Al Qadi Sharik ibn 'Abdillah, Abu 'Abdillah an-Nakha'i al-Kufi (۱۷۷); ۳۳. al-Hafiz 'Abdullah (or 'Ubaydullah) ibn 'Ubaydu 'r-Rahman (or 'Abdu 'r-Rahman) al-Kufi, Abu 'Abdi 'r-Rahman al-Ashja'i (۱۸۲); ۳۴. Nuh ibn Qays, Abu Rawh al-Huddani al-Basri (۱۸۳); ۳۵. al-Muttalib ibn Ziyad ibn Ab; Zuhayr al-Kufi, Abu Talib (۱۸۵); ۳۶. Al Qadi Hassan ibn Ibrahim al-'Anazi, Abu Hashim (۱۸۶); ۳۷. al-Hafiz Jarir ibn 'Abdi 'l-Hamid, Abu 'Abdillah ad-Dabbi al-Kufi ar-Razi (۱۸۸); ۳۸. al-Fadl ibn Musa, Abu 'Abdillah al-Marwazi as-Sinani (۱۹۲); ۳۹. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Madani al-Basri (۱۹۳); ۴۰. al-Hafiz Isma'il ibn 'Uliyyah, Abu Bishr ibn Ibrahim al-Asadi (۱۹۳);

۴۱. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, Abu 'Amr ibn Abi 'Adiyy as-Sulami al-Basri(۱۹۴);۴۲. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Khazim, Abu Mu' awiyah atTamimi ad-Darir (۱۹۵); ۴۳. al-Hafiz. Muhammad ibn Fudayl, Abu 'Abdi'r-Rahman al-Kufi (۱۹۵); ۴۴. al-Hafiz al-Waki' ibn al-Jarrah ar-Ru'asi alKufi (۱۹۶); ۴۵. al-Hafiz Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, Abu Muhammad ai-Hilali al-Kufi (۱۹۸); ۴۶. al-Hafiz 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, Abu Hisham al-Hamdan; al-Kharifi (۱۹۹); ۴۷. al-Hafiz Hanash ibn al Marith ibn Laqit an-Nakha'i al-Kufi; ۴۸. Abu Mupammad Musa ibn Ya'qub az-Zama'; al-Madani; ۴۹. al-'Ala' ibn Salim al-'Attar al-Kufi; ۵۰. al-Azraq ibn 'Ali ibn Muslim al-Hanafi, Abu 'l-Jahm al-Kufi;

۵۱. Ham ibn Ayyub al-Hanafi al-Kufi; ۵۲. Fudayl ibn Marzuq al-Agharr ar-Ru'asi al-Kufi (ca. ۱۶۰); ۵۳. Abu Hamzah Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah as-Sulami al-Kufi; ۵۴. Musa ibn Muslim al-Hizami ash-Shaybani, Abu

p: ۳۴

Isa al-Kufi at-Tahhan (Musa as-Saghir); ۵۵. Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Kathir al-Ansari al- ' Madani ۵۶. 'Uthman ibn Sa'd ibn Murrah al Qurashi, Abu 'Abdillah (Abu 'Ali) al-Kufi. (۱)۳۲

Thus this hadith continues to be narrated by so many narrators (ruwat) in every era as to make it mutawatir. Coming to the scholars and writers who have narrated this hadith in their books of traditions, it is enough to mention that al-'Allamah al-Amini has listed the (names of ۳۶۰ scholars according to fourteenth century.(۲

Some people have tried to cast doubts about the asnad of this hadith. As every student of Islamic tradition knows, if a hadith is mutawatir there is no need to look at individual's asnad at all. Still to show the hollowness of this charge, I would like to give here the .(opinions of some of the famous traditionalists (muhaddithun

:II. Asnad of Hadith of Ghadir

a. al-Hafiz Abu 'Isa at-Tirmidhi (d.۲۷۹ A.H.) has said in his Sahih (one of the as-Sihah as-Sittah) that "This is a good (hasan) and correct (sahih) hadith."(۳)۳۴

b. al-Hafiz Abu Ja'far at-Tahawi (d. ۳۲۱ A.H.) has said in his Mushkil u'l-athar that "This hadith is sahih according to the chains of narrators (asnad) and no one has said anything contrary to its narTators." (۴)۳۵

c. Abu 'Abdillah al-Hakim an-Naysaburi (d. ۴۰۵ A.H.) has narrated this hadith from several (chains in his al-Mustadrak and has said that this hadith is sahih.(۵

d. Abu Muhammad Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-'Asim; has said: "This hadith is accepted by ummah, and it is in conformity

p: ۳۵

.Ibid., pp.۷۳-۸۱ -۱

.Ibid ., pp. ۷۳-۱۵۱ -۲

at-Tirmidhi: as-Sahih, vol. ۲, p.۲۹۸ -۳

at-Tahawi: Mushkilu 'l-athar, vol.۲, p.۳۰۸ -۴

.al-Hakim: al-Mustadrak, vol.۳, pp.۱۰۹-۱۰ -۵

.with the principles

Likewise, the following traditionalists (among hundreds of others) have quoted that this (hadith is sahih:- (۱)

Abu 'Abdillah al-Mahamili al-Baghdadi in his Amali; ۲. Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr al-Qurtubi in al- .۱ Isti 'ab; ۳. Ibnu 'l-Maghazili ash-shafi'i in al-Manaqib; ۴. Abu Hamid Ghazzali in Sirru 'l-'alamayn; ۵. Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi in alManaqib; ۶. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi in Tadhkirat ;khawaissi 'l-ummah; ۷. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid al-Mu'tazili in his Sharh Nahji 'l-balaighah

Abu 'Abdillah al Ganji ash-Shafi'i in Kifayatu 't-talib; ۹. Abu 'l-Makarim 'Ala'ud-Din as- .۸ Simnani in al-'Urwatu'l-wuthqa; ۱۰. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in Tahdhibu'l-tahdhib; ۱۱. Ibn Kathir ad-Dimashqi in his Tarikh; ۱۲. Jalalu'd-Din as-Suyuti; ۱۳. al-Qastalani in al-Mawahibu 'l-ladunniyyah; ۱۴. Ibn Hajar al-Makki in as-Sawa'iqu 'l-muhriqah; ۱۵. 'Abdu'l-Haqq ad Dihlawi in Sharhu 'l-mishkat; and many others. (۲)۳۸

It should be noted that all the names mentioned above are of Sunni scholars; and in Sunni usage, a hadith is called "sahih" when it is uninterruptedly narrated by persons of approved probity ('adil) who have perfect memory, does not have any defect, and is not unusual (shadhdh). (۳)۳۹

If the above virtues are found in the asnad of a hadith but the memory of one or more of its narrators is a degree less than that required for sahih, then it is called "hasan" (۴)۴۰

So when the Sunni scholars say that the hadith of Ghadir is sahih, they mean that its narrators are of approved probity (i.e., they do not have any defect in belief and deeds) and have perfect memory, and that this hadith has no

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.al Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. ۱, p. ۲۹۵ -۱

.Ibid.,pp.۲۹۴-۳۱۳ -۲

.Subhi' as-Salih: 'Ulumu 'l-hadith wa mustalahatuh, p. ۱۴۵ -۳

.Ibid., p.l۵۶ -۴

.defect and is not unusual

:III. General Meanings of Mawla

As the Sunnis cannot deny the authenticity of the hadith of Ghadir, they try to downplay its significance by saying that the word "mawla" in this hadith means 'friend', and that the !"Holy Prophet wanted to announce that: "Whoever whose friend I am, 'Ali is his friend

The trouble is that not a single person who was present in Ghadir grasped this alleged meaning. Hassan ibn Thabit, the famous poet of the Holy Prophet, composed a poem and :recited it before the audience, in which he said

The Prophet then said to him: "Stand up, O Ali, As I am pleased to make you Imam and ."Guide after me

:Umar ibn al-Khattab congratulated 'Aliin these words'

Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib, this morning you became mawla of every believing " man and woman." (۱)۴۱

If mawla means 'friend' then why the congratulations? And was 'Ali 'enemy' of all believing men and women before that time, so that 'Umar said that 'this morning' you ?became friend of them all

al-Imam 'Ali (a. s.) himself wrote to Mu' awiyah: "And the Messenger of Allah granted to me his authority over you on the day of Ghadir Khumm. (۲)۴۲

And there are many other Companions of the Holy Prophet who used in their poems the ".word "mawla" in connection with Ghadir Khumm in the sense of "master

Countless scholars of the Qur'an, Arabic grammar and literature have interpreted the word "mawla " as "awla " which means "having more authority " . The names of the following

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al-Khatib at-Tabrizi: Mishkatu 'l-masabih [p.۵۵۷]; Mir Khwand: Habibu 's-siyar, [vol. ۱, pt. -۱

۳, p. ۱۴۴]; at-Tabari: [al-Wilayah]; [ar-Razi: at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir, vol. ۱۲, pp. ۴۹-۵۰]; Ahmad: al-Musnad, [vol. ۴, p. ۲۸۱]; Ibn Abi Shaybah: al-Musannaf; Abu Ya'la: al-Musnad; Ahmad ibn 'Uqdah: al-Wilayah, and many others. [See also al-Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۷۰- ۸۳ - for further references.]

۲- al-Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. I, p. ۳۴۰.

:scholars may be quoted here as examples

Ibn 'Abbas (in his Tafsir, on the margin of ad-Durru 'l-manthur, vol. ۵, p. ۳۵۵); al-Kalbi (as quoted in at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir of ar-Razi, vol. ۲۹. p.۲۲۷; al-Alusi, Ruhu 'l-ma'ani, vol. ۲۷, p. ۱۷۸); al-Farra', (ar-Razi, ibid.; al-Alusi, ibid.); Abu 'Ubaydah Mu'ammar ibn Muthanna alBasri (ar-Razi, ibid.; and ash-Sharif al-Jurjani, Sharhu 'l-mawaqif, vol. ۳, p. ۲۷۱); al-Akhfash al-Awsat (in Nihayatu 'l-'uqul); al-Bukhari (in as-Sahih, vol.۷, p. ۲۴۰); Ibn Qutaybah (in al Qurtayn, vol.۲, p.۱۶۴); Abu'l-'Abbas Tha'lab (in Sharhu 's-sab'ah al-mu'allaqah of az-Zuzani); at-Tabari (in his Tafsir, vol.۹, p. ۱۱۷); al-Wahidi (in al-Wasit); ath-Tha'labi (in al-Kashf wa 'l-bayan); az-Zamakhshari (in al-Kashshaf, vol. ۲, p. ۴۳۵); al-Baydawi (in his Tafsir, vol.۲, p. ۴۹۷); an-Nasafi (in his Tafsir, vol. ۴, p. ۲۲۹); al-Khazin al-Baghdadi (in his Tafsir vol. ۴, p. ۲۲۹); and Muhibbu'd-Din Afandi (in his Tanzilu 'l-ayat). (۱)۴۳

IV. Meaning of "Mawla" in the Context

Now let us examine what meaning can be inferred from the context of this hadith. If a word has more than one meaning, the best way to ascertain its true connotation is to look at the association (qarinah) and the context. There are scores of "associations" in this hadith which clearly show that the only meaning fitting the occasion can be "master". :Some of them are as follows

First: The question which the Holy Prophet asked just before this declaration: He asked them: "Do I Not have more authority upon you than you have yourselves?" When they :said: "Yes, surely," then the Prophet proceeded to declare that

.Whoever whose mawla I am"

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. See al-Amini: al-Ghadir, pp. ۳۴۴-۵۰, for detail references -۱

."Ali is his mawla'

Without doubt, the word "mawla" in this declaration has the same meaning as: (having more authority upon you) has in the preceding question. At least ۶۴ Sunni traditionalists have quoted that preceding question; among them are Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Majah, an-Nasa'i and at-Tirmidhi.(۱)

:Second: The following prayer which the Holy Prophet uttered just after this declaration

O Allah! Love him who loves 'Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy of 'Ali; help him who" helps 'Ali, and forsake him who forsakes 'A۱i."

This prayer shows that 'A۱i, on that day, was entrusted with a responsibility which, by its very nature, would make some people his enemy (and that responsibility could not be that except of a ruler); and in carrying out that responsibility he would need helpers and supporters. Are helpers ever needed to carry on a ' friendship '?

Third: The declaration of the Holy Prophet that: "It seems imminent that I will be called away (by Allah) and I will answer that call." This clearly shows that he was making arrangements for the leadership of the Muslims after his death.

Fourth: The congratulations of the Companions and their expressions of joy do not leave room for doubt concerning the meaning of this declaration.

Fifth: The occasion, place and time: Imagine the Holy Prophet breaking his journey in midday, and detaining nearly one-hundred-thousand travellers under the burning sun of the Arabian desert, making them sit in a thorny place on the burning sand, and making a pulpit

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۱- Ibid., pp. ۳۷۰-۳۷۱.

of camelsaddles; then imagine him delivering a long lecture and at the end of all those preparations coming out with an announcement that: "Whoover loves me should love !"'Ali," or "Whoever whose friend I am, 'Ali is his friend

Is such a thing excusable before common sense? No, but some people are ready to !accuse the Holy Prophet of such childish behaviour

Ali "self" of the Prophet .'۱۱

There are many verses which point to the caliphate of 'A۱i ibn Abi Talib (as). It is not possible to enumerate them all here. But the event of Mubahalah (malediction, .imprecation) which took place in the ninth year of the hijrah should be noted

In this year a delegation consisting of fourteen Christians came from Najran to meet the Prophet. When they met the Prophet they asked him: "What is your opinion about Jesus?" The Apostle said: "You may take rest today and you will receive the reply afterwards." The next day three verses of the third chapter of the Qur'an (۳:۵۹-۶۱) about Jesus were revealed. When the Christians did not accept the words of Allah and insisted on their own :beliefs, the Apostle recited the following verse

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: "Come let us call our sons and your-sons, and our women and your women, and our selves and your selves, then let us be earnest in prayer and invoke the curse of Allah .(upon the liars (۳:۶۱

The next day the Christians came out on one

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side; and on the other side, the Apostle came out of his house carrying Husayn in his arms with Hasan walking by his side holding his hand. Behind him was Fatimah, and behind her, 'A۱i. When the Christians saw the five pure souls they abstained from the proposed .malediction and submitted to a treaty with the Prophet

In this verse, according to Jabir ibn 'Abdillah al-Ansari, the word "sons" refers to Hasan and Husayn, the word "women" refers to Fatimah, and the words "our selves" refer to the Prophet and 'A۱i . Thus 'A۱i ibn Abi Talib (a. s.), has been referred to in the verse of (Mubahalah as "the self" of the Prophet.(۱

It also follows that just as it is unlawful to seek to be superior to the Prophet, similarly it is unlawful to supercede 'Ali he being the "self" of the Prophet according to the words of Allah. Anyone who presumed to supercede him was in essence presuming to supercede .the Prophet

Traditions .۱۲

After the declaration of Ghadir, there is really no need to provide more proofs of the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). Yet, it may be pertinent to quote some ahadith in this .regard

:In the Hadithu'th-thaqalayn the Prophet said

I am leaving two weighty things among you -the Book of Allah and my Ahlu 'l-bayt. If you adhere to them and continue to and obey both of them and forsake neither, you will never be misled. They will not separate from each other till they

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.al-Wahidi: Asbabu 'n-nuzul, p. ۴۰; as-Suyuti: ad-Durru 'l-manthur, vol. ۲, p. ۳۸ -۱

.(reach me at Kawthar (the pool in Paradise

Now, it is admitted on all hands that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib is not only one of the Ahlu 'l-bayt but is the head of the Ahlu 'l-bayt. Therefore, the obligation of his obedience is proved from this universal accepted tradition. (۱)۴۶

Then there is the hadith known as Hadithu 'l-manzilah. In the expedition of Tabuk (in the month of Rajab of the ninth year A.H.) the Prophet left 'A۱i as his deputy in Medina. 'Ali exclaimed with dismay: "Are you leaving me behind?" The Prophet asked him: "O 'Ali, are you not satisfied that you have the same position in relation to me as Harun had to Musa ? "except that there is no prophet after me

The Prophet thereby meant that as Musa had left behind Harun to look after his people when he went to receive the Commandments, in the same way he was leaving 'Ali behind as his deputy to look after the affairs of Islam during his absence. (۲)۴۷

Then there is the occasion of communicating the verses of surah al-Bara'ah (ch. ۹) to the people of Mecca. First Abu Bakr was sent to proclaim it before the pagans. Later the Prophet sent 'Ali to take the surah from Abu Bakr and announce it at Mecca. Abu Bakr returned to Medina from his journey midway en route to

Mecca and asked the Prophet whether any verse or order was received from Allah against him announcing the surah. The Prophet said: "Jibril came

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This hadith can be seen in most books of traditions. See for instance, at-Tirmidhi: as- -۱ Sahih, vol. ۲, p. ۳۰۸; Ibnu 'l-Athir: Usdu 'l-ghabah, vol. ۲, p. ۱۲; as-Suyuti: ad-Durru 'l-manthur, vol. ۶, p. ۷; al-Muttaqi al-Hindi: Kanzu 'l-'ummal, (Hyderabad, ۱۳۱۲ A. H.), p. ۴۸.

Ibn Majah: as-Sunan, p.l۲; Ahmad: al-Musnad, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۴; an-Nasa'i: al-Khasa'is, pp. -۲ I۵-۱۶; atTahawi: Mushkilu 'l-athar, vol. ۲, p. ۳۰۹; al-Muhibb at-Tabari: Dhakhatiru 'l-'uqba, .p.۶۳

to me and said that no one shall deliver the message except myself or the person who is from me." (۱)۴۸

The moral principle evident in these declarations of the Prophet is also expressed in the .following tradition which has been accepted by all sects

The Prophet said: " 'Ali is with the truth and the truth is with 'Ali; whither soever 'Ali turns, the truth (also) turns with him."(۲) The rightful caliphate is thus rightly entrusted to 'Ali and .to none else

Another is the hadith of "Divine Light" (Hadithu 'n-nur). Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani writes in Mawaddatu'l-qurba, on the authority of Salman al-Farsi, that the Prophet said: "I and 'Ali were both created from one and the same nur (Divine Light) four thousand years before Adam was created, and when Adam was created that nur was given a place in his backbone. So we continued to occupy the same place till we were separated in the back of 'Abdu 'l-Muttalib. Therefore in me is the prophethood and in 'Ali is the caliphate." In Riyadu 'l-fada'il, the last words of the above hadith are written as follows: "Then He made (me a prophet and made 'A۱i a wasiyy (vicegerent)."(۳

Ulu 'L-Amr must be ma'sum .۱۳

:Allah says in the Qur'an

O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you believe in Allah and the last day; this is better and very good in the

p: ۴۳

۱- as-Suyuti: ad-Durru 'l-manthur, vol. ۶, p. ۲۰۹, at-Tabari: at-Tafsir, vol. ۱۰, p. ۴۷; an-Nasa'i: al-Khasa 'is, p. ۲۰.

۲- al-Khati'b al-Khwarazmi: al-Manaqib, p. ۵۶; al-Hammuyi: Fara'idu 's-simtayn, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۶; al-Khati'b al-Baghdadi: Tari'kh Baghdad, vo۱. ۱۴, p. ۳۲۱

۳- As quoted in Mafatihu 'l-matalib, p.۳۹۶; al-Ganji: Kifayatu 't-talib, p. ۱۷۶.

.(end (۴:۵۹

This verse obliges the Muslims to two obediences: First, the obedience of Allah; second, the obedience of the Apostle and 'those vested with authority from among you' (uli'l-amri minkum). The arrangement of the words shows that the obedience of ulu 'l-amr is as much obligatory as is the obedience of the Apostle. Naturally, it means that ulu 'l-amr should be of the same caliber as the Apostle; otherwise Allah would not have joined them .together in this verse

Before deciding who the ulu 'l-amr are, it will be of help to have a look at the commandment of obeying the Apostle, to see how all-encampassing and al۱-pervading this commandment is and how great the authority of the Apostle of Allah is. Allah says in :the Qur'an

And We did not send any Apostle, but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission .((۴:۶۴

The prophets and the apostles were to be obeyed and followed; the followers were not expected to check every action of the prophet to decide what was to be obeyed and what not. Clearly, it shows that the prophets and apostles were free from error and sin; .otherwise Allah would not have ordered the people to obey the apostles unconditionally

:There are many verses in which Allah commands us to obey the Prophet

(O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle.(۱

:Again, He says

(And whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle. (۲

:In the same surah it is asserted

Whoever obeys the Apostle, he

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۱- Qur'an, ۴۷:۳۳; see also:۳:۳۲,۱۳۲; ۵:۹۲; ۸:۱,۲۰, ۴۶; ۲۴:۵۴; ۵۸:۱۳; ۶۴:۱۲.

۲- Qur'an,۴:۱۳;see also: ۴:۶۹; ۲۴:۵۲; ۳۳:۷۱; ۴۸:۱۸.

.(indeed obeys Allah (۴:۸۰

In these as well as numerous other verses of the Qur'an, obedience of Allah is synonymous with the obedience of the prophets. Such assertion would have been .(impossible if the prophets were not ma'sum (infallible

:Now, note the following verse

.(and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one (۷۶:۲۶ . . .

The picture is complete. The prophets are to be obeyed; the sinners are not to be obeyed. The only conclusion is that the prophets were not sinners or wrong-doers. In other words, .they were ma'sum-infallible, sinless

Just imagine what impossible situation would have been created if any prophet began exhorting his followers to commit a mistake or sin. The wretched followers would have been condemned to the displeasure of Allah in any case. If they obeyed the Prophet and committed that sin they disobeyed the command given by Allah and thus were disgraced. If, on the other hand, they disobeyed the Prophet, they again disobeyed the command of Allah about obeying the Prophet. So, it appears that a non-ma'sum prophet could bring .nothing but disgrace and condemnation to his people

Looking especially at the Holy Prophet of Islam, Allah tells us

and whatever the Apostle gives you, take it; and from whatever he forbids you, keep . . . .(back (۵۹:۷

This means that the permission or prohibition of the Holy Prophet was always in accordance with the will of Allah and always favoured by Him. It proves that the Holy Prophet was

.ma'sum. No one can be so sure about the commands of a man who is not infallible

:There is another verse: Say

.(If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins" (۳:۳۱"

Here the love of Allah is made contingent on following the Prophet of Islam. Both sides of love are included in it. If you love Allah follow the Prophet; if you love the Prophet, Allah will love you. Does it not show that the Prophet was absolutely free from any type of ?blemish

:Not only his actions, even his words were the Commands of Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an

Nor does he speak out of (his own) desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed (۵۳:۳-.(۴

Here we find the highest degree of infallibility which can be imagined. Also, there are :several verses in which the following words have been used for the Holy Prophet

and Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and . . . (purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom.(۱

How could a prophet purify others of sins and blemishes if he himself were not pure? How could a man teach others wisdom if he had no wisdom to distinguish right from wrong; or worst still, if he had no willpower to resist from doing wrong? The Prophet was to teach people the Book of Allah; this means that he knew the Commandments of Allah. He was to purify them and

p: ۴۶

.Qur'an,۶۲:۲;seealso:۲:۱۲۹;۳:۱۶۴ -۱

.teach them wisdom. So this means he had wisdom and purity himself

:Witness to the perfection of his character is found in the Qur'an where it says

.(And most surely you are on sublime morality (۶۸:۴

.A man committing mistakes does not deserve such compliments

:All these verses clearly show two things

First: The authority of the Holy Prophet upon the believers was unlimited and all-comprehensive. Any order given by him, under any condition, in any place, at any time, .was to be obeyed unconditionally

Second: That supreme authority was given to him because he was ma'sum (sinless) and free from all types of error and sin. Otherwise, Allah would not have ordered us to obey .him unconditionally

In this verse, ulu 'l-amr, have been given exactly the same authority over the Muslims, because both the 'Apostle' and the ulu 'l-amr have been jointly mentioned under one word "obey"; which shows that the obedience of ulu 'l-amr has the same standing as the .obedience of the Apostle

It naturally follows that ulu 'l-amr must also be ma 'sum (sinless) and free from any type of error and sin. Otherwise, their obedience would not have been joined with the obedience of the Prophet. Amiru 'l-Mu'minin 'Ali (as), said: "The one who disobeys Allah is not to be obeyed; and verily obedience is of Allah and of His Apostle and those vested with authority. Verily, Allah ordered (the people) to obey the Apostle because he was sinless and clean (pure), who would not tell the people to disobey

p: ۴۷

Allah; and verily He ordered (the people) to obey those vested with authority because (they are sinless and clean (pure), and would not tell the people to disobey Allah.(۱)

?Ulu 'l-Amr: does it mean Muslim ruler .۱۴

Many of our Sunni brethren tend to interpret "ulu 'l-amr" as ' the rulers from among yourselves', i.e., Muslims rulers. This interpretation is not based on any logical reasoning; it is solely based on twists of history. The majority of the Muslims have remained as a vassal of the monarchs and rulers, interpreting and reinterpreting Islam and the Qur'an .to please the powers to be

The history of the Muslims (like any other nation) is replete with the names of rulers whose injustice, debauchery and tyranny have tarnished the name of Islam, as will be mentioned briefly in the latter part of this text. Such rulers have always been and will .always be. And we are told that they are the ulu 'l-amr mentioned in this verse

If Allah were to order us to obey such kings and rulers, an impossible situation would be created for the Muslims. The wretched followers would be condemned to the displeasure of Allah, no matter what they did. If they obeyed these rulers, they disobeyed the Command of Allah: "Do not obey a sinner." And if they disobeyed such rulers, they again disobeyed the Command of Allah to "obey the Muslim rulers" . So, if we accept this interpretation, the Muslims are condemned to eternal disgrace whether they obey or .disobey their non-ma'sum Muslim rulers

Also, there

p: ۴۸

[as-Saduq: 'Ilalu 'sh shara'i', [vol. I, p . ۱۲۳ -۱

are Muslim rulers of different beliefs and persuasions. There are Shafi'is, Wahhabis, Malikis, Hanafis, as well as Shi'ahs and Ibadis. Now, according to this interpretation the Sunnis residing under an Ibadi Sultan (like in Oman) should follow Ibadi tenents; and those residing under a Shi'ah ruler (like in Iran) should follow Shi'ah beliefs. Do these people have the conviction of courage to follow their professed interpretation to its logical ?end

The famous Sunni commentator, Fakhru 'd-Din ar-Razi, concluded in his Tafsiru 'l kabir (۱) that this verse proves that ulu 'l-amr must be ma'sum. He argues that Allah has commanded the people to obey ulu 'l-amr unconditionally; therefore, it is essential for the ulu 'l-amr to be ma'sum. Because if there is any possiblity of their committing sin (and sin is forbidden), it will mean that one has to obey them and also disobey them in that very action. And this is impossible! Then to dissuade his readers from the Ahlu 'l-bayt, he .invented the theory that the Muslim ummah as a whole is ma 'sum

This interpretation is unique, as no Muslim scholar ever subscribed to this theory and it is not based on any tradition. It is quite surprising that ar-Razi accepts that each individual of the Muslim nation is non-ma'sum, yet still claims that their sum-total is ma'sum. Even a primary school student knows that ۲۰۰ cows plus ۲۰۰ cows makes ۴۰۰ cows and not one .horse

But ar-Razi says that ۷۰ million non ma'sum plus ۷۰ rnillion non-ma'sum will

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ar-Razi: at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir, vol.۱۰, p.l۴۴ -۱

make one ma'sum! Does he want us to believe that if all the patients of a mental hospital (joined together they would be equal to one sane person?(١

:The poet of the Orient, Iqbal, has said

.The minds of two hundred donkeys cannot produce the thoughts of one man

Obviously, with his great knowledge he was able to conclude that ulu 'l-amr must be ma'sum; but it was his prejudice which compelled him to say that the Islamic ummah as a .whole is ma'sum

Also, he did not pause to see that the verse contains the word "minkum" ("from among you") which shows that the said ulu 'l-amr shall be part of the Muslim ummah, not the whole Muslim nation. And if the whole Muslim nation is to be obeyed, then who is there ?left to obey

Real meaning of Ulu 'l-Amr .١٥

.Now we return to the correct interpretation of the above verse

Al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) said that this verse was revealed about 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hasan and Husayn (as) . Upon hearing this, someone asked the Imam: "People say, 'Why "'?did Allah not mention the names of 'Ali and his family in His Book

The Imam answered: "Tell them that there came the command of salat (prayer), but Allah did not mention whether three or four raka'at (units) (to be performed); it was the Apostle of Allah who explained all the details. And (the command of) zakat was revealed, but Allah did not say that it is one in every forty dirham; it was the

p: ٥٠

Though we hold special respect for others' opinions, and particularly for the beliefs of -١ our Sunni brothers, at the same time, the author had no other alternative but to criticize the opinion of ar-Razi with these examples. Of course, we do not regard this opinion of (.ar-Razi to be the manifesto of all Sunni brothers. (pub

Apostle of Allah who explained it; and hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) was ordered but Allah did not say to perform tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) seven times the Apostle of :Allah explained it. Likewise, the verse was revealed

,Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority from among you

and it was revealed about 'A۱i and Hasan and Husayn (as). (۱)۵۷

In Kifayatu 'l-athar, there is a tradition from Jabir ibn 'Abdillah al-Ansari, in explanation of this verse. When it was revealed, Jabir said to the Prophet: "We know Allah and the Prophet, but who are those vested with authority whose obedience has been conjoined to that of Allah and yourself ?" The Prophet said: "They are my caliphs and the Imams of the Muslims after me. The first of them is 'Ali, then Hasan, then Husayn, then 'A۱i, son of Husayn; then Muhammad, son of 'A۱i, who has been mentioned as al-Baqir in the Torah. O Jabir! You will meet him. When you see him, convey my salam (greetings) to him. He will be succeeded by his son Ja'far as-Sadiq (the Truthful); then Musa, son of Ja'far; then 'A۱i, son of Musa; then Muhammad, son of 'A۱i; then 'A۱i, son of Muhammad; then Hasan, son .of 'Ali

He will be followed by his son whose name and patronym (kunyah) will be the same as" mine. He will be Hujjatu-llah (Proof of Allah) on the earth and Baqiyyatu-llah (the one spared by Allah to maintain the cause of

p: ۵۱

.al-'Ayyashi: at-Tafsir, vol. ۱, pp.۲۴۹-۵۰; Fayd al-Kashani: at-Tafsir (as-Safi), vol.۱, p.۳۶۴ -۱

faith) among mankind. He will conquer the whole world from east to west. So long will he remain hidden from the eyes of his followers and friends that the belief in his imamah Will ."remain only in those hearts which have been tested by Allah for faith

?Jabir said: "O Messenger of Allah! Will his followers benefit from his seclusion

The Prophet said "Yes! by Him Who sent me with prophethood! They will be guided by his light, and benefit from his wilaayah (love; authority) during his seclusions just as people benefit from the sun even when-it is hidden in a cloud O Jabir! This is from the hidden secrets of Allah and the treasured knowledge of-Allah. So guard it except from the people ((who deserve to know) . "(١)

This hadith has been quoted from Shi'ah sources. Sunni traditions do not provide as much detail; still there are many Sunni traditions which refer to the Twelve Imams, as explained .in the next chapter

Now that we know who "those vested with Authority" are, it is evident that the question of obeying tyrant and unjust rulers does not arise at all. Muslims are not required by this verse to obey rulers who may be unjust, tyrannical, ignorant, and selfish and sunk in debauchery. They are in fact ordered to obey the specified Twelve Imams, all of whom were sinless and free from evil thoughts and deeds. Obeying them has no risks whatsoever. Nay, it protects from all risks; because they

p: ٥٢

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al-Khazzaz: Kifayatu 'l-athar, p. ٥٣ -١

will never give an order against the Will of Allah and will treat all human beings with love, .justice and equity

Twelve caliphs or Imams .۱۶

Now it is advisable to refer to several parts of the ۷۷th chapter of Yanabi'u 'l-mawaddah .of al-Hafiz Sulayman ibn Ibrahim al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi

A well known hadith has been quoted that: "There will be twelve caliphs, all from the Quraysh", in many books including those of al Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and at-. Tirmidhi

The author quotes many traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet said: "I, 'Ali, Hasan, ."Husayn and nine of the descendants of Husayn are pure and sinless

He also quotes that the Holy Prophet told al-Imam Husayn: "You are a chief, brother of a chief; you are an Imam, son of an Imam, brother of an Imam; you are Proof (of Allah), son of a Proof (of Allah), brother of a Proof (of Allah), and father of nine Proofs (of Allah), ."the ninth of whom will be al-Mahdi

After quoting many such traditions, he writes: "Some scholars have said that the traditions (which show that the caliphs after the Holy Prophet would be twelve) are well known, from many asnad. Now, with the passage of time and through historical events, we know that in this hadith the Holy Prophet has referred to the Twelve Imams from his :Ahlu 'l-bayt and descendants, because

This hadith cannot apply to the four al-khulafa'u 'r-rdshidun from among his" .Companions, as they were less than twelve

And it cannot apply to the caliphs from the"

p: ۵۳

tribe of Umayyad, because (a) they were more than twelve; (b) all of them were tyrants and unjust (except 'Umar ibn 'Abdi'l-'Aziz); and (c) they were not from the Banu Hashim and the Holy Prophet had said in a hadith that: 'all of them will be from the Banu Hashim. . .' "And it cannot apply to the caliphs from the Banu 'Abbas, because: (a) they were more :than twelve; and (b) they did not comply with (the demands of) the verse

Say.'I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for (my) near relatives' ,((۴۲:۲۳

nor with the Tradition of the Mantle (Hadithu'l-kisa'); (i.e., they persecuted the .(descendants of the Prophet

Therefore, the only way to interpret this hadith is to accept that it refers to the Twelve" Imams from the Holy Prophet's Ahlu'l-bayt and descendants, because they were, in their times, the most knowledgeable, the most illustrious, the most god-fearing, the most pious, the highest in their family lineage, the best in personal virtues, and the most honoured before Allah; and their knowledge was derived from their ancestor (the (Prophet) through their fathers, and by inheritance and by direct teachings from Allah."(١)

(Few facts about the twelve Imams(a .١٧

First Imam: Amiru 'l-Mu'minin Abu '١-Hasan 'ALI al-Murtada, son of Abu Talib, was born on ١٣th Rajab, ١٠ years before the declaration of the Prophethood (۶٠٠ A.D.), inside the Kabah; became Imam, on the death of the Prophet on ٢٨th Safar, ١١ /۶٣٢; was fatally wounded by the poisoned sword

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١- al-Qunduzi; Yanabi 'u 'l-mawaddah, pp.۴۴۴-٧.

of Ibn Muljam while engaged in prayers at the Mosque of Kufah (Iraq), and expired two days later on ۲۱st Ramadan, ۴۰/۶۶۱ and was buried at an-Najaf al-Ashraf (Iraq).

Second Imam: Abu Muhammad AL-HASAN al-Mujtaba, son of 'Ali (as), was born on ۱۵th Ramadan, ۳/۶۲۵ at Medina; died of poison on ۷th or ۲۸th Safar, ۵۰/۶۷۰ at Medina.

Third Imam: Sayyidu'sh-Shuhada' Abu 'Abdillah AL-HUSAYN, son of 'Ali (as), was born on ۳rd Sha'ban, ۴/۶۲۶ at Medina, was martyred with his sons, relatives and Companions, on ۱۰th Muharram, ۶۱/۶۸۰, at Karbala' (Iraq). He and his elder brother, al-Hasan, were sons of Fatimah az-Zahra' (as), daughter of the Holy Prophet.

Fourth Imam: Abu Muhammad 'ALI Zaynu 'l-'Abidin, son of al-Husayn (as), was born on ۵th Sha'ban, ۳۸/۶۵۹; died of poison on ۲۵th Muharram, ۹۴/۷۱۲ or ۹۵/۷۱۳ at Medina.

Fifth Imam: Abu Ja'far MUHAMMAD al-Baqir, son of 'Ali Zayn u'l-'Abidin (as), was born on ۱st Rajab, ۵۷/۶۷۷ at Medina; died of poison on ۷th Dhu 'l-hijjah, ۱۱۴/۷۳۳ at Medina.

Sixth Imam: Abu 'Abdillah JAFAR as-Sadiq, son of Muhammad al-Baqir (as), was born on ۱۷th Rabi u'l-awwal, ۸۳/۷۰۲ at Medina; died there of poison on ۲۵th Shawwal, ۱۴۸/۷۶۵.

Seventh Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan al-Awwal, MUSA al-Kazim, son of Ja'far as-Sadiq (as), was born at al-Abwa' (۷ miles from Medina) on ۷th Safar, ۱۲۹/۷۴۶; died of poison on ۲۵th Rajab, ۱۸۳/۷۹۹ in the prison of Harun ar-Rashld at Baghdad and was buried at al-Kazimiyyah, near Baghdad (Iraq).

Eighth Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan ath-Thani, 'ALI ar-Rida, son of Musa al-Kazim (as), was born at

Medina on ۱۱th Dhu 'l-qi'dah, ۱۴۸/۷۶۵; died of poison on ۱۷th Safar, ۲۰۳/۸۱۸ at Mashhad .((Khurasan, Iran

Ninth Imam: Abu Ja'far ath-Thani, MUHAMMAD at-Taqi al-Jawad, son of 'A۱i ar-Rida (as), was born on ۱۰th Rajab, ۱۹۵/۸۱۱ at Medina; died of poison at Baghdad on ۳۰th Dhu 'lqi'dah, .۲۲۰/۸۳۵; was buried near his grandfather at al-Kazimiyyah

Tenth Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan ath-Thalith, 'ALI an-Naqi al-Hadi, son of Muhammad at-Taqi (as), was born on ۵th Rajab, ۲۱۲/۸۲۷ at Medina; died of poison at Samarra' (Iraq) on ۳rd .Rajab, ۲۵۴/۸۶۸

Eleventh Imam: Abu Muhammad, ALHASAN al-'Askari, son of 'Ali an-Naqi (as), was born on ۸th Rabi 'u 'th-thani, ۲۳۲/۸۴۶ at Medina; died of poison at Samarra' (Iraq) on ۸th Rabi'u .'l-awwal, ۲۶۰/۸۷۴

Twelfth Imam: Abu 'l-Qasim, MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI, son of al-Hasan al-'Askari (as), was born on ۱۵th Sha'ban, ۲۵۵/۸۶۹ at Samarra' (Iraq). He is our present Imam; he went into Lesser Occultation in ۲۶۰/۸۷۴ which continued until ۳۲۹/۸۴۴; then the Greater Occultation began, which still continues. He will reappear when Allah allows him, to establish the Kingdom of Allah on earth, to fill the world with justice and equity, as it would be full of injustice and tyranny. He is al-Qa'im (the one who shall stand to establish the rule of Allah); al-Hujjah (the Proof of Allah over His creatures); Sahibu 'z-Zaman (the Lord of Our .(Time), and Sahibu 'l-Amr (the one vested with Divine authority

Part ۳– The Sunni Point of View

Sunni views on the caliphate .۱۸

The majority of Sunnis today are the Ash'arites. They, as well as the Mu'tazilites, believe that the institution of Imamate/Caliphate is

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necessary, and it is incumbent (wajib) on men to appoint a caliph. The Mu'tazilites hold that it is incumbent according to reason; the Ash'arites believe it is incumbent according .to tradition

An-Nasaf; writes in his al-Aqai'id, "The Muslims cannot do without an Imam who shall occupy himself with the enforcing of their decisions, and in implementing their hudud (penal code) and guarding their frontiers, and equipping their armies, and receiving their alms, and putting down robberies and thieving and highwayman, and maintaining the Friday and 'id prayers, and removing quarrels that fall between people, and receiving evidence bearing on legal claims, and marrying minors who have no guardians and (dividing booty."(۱

The Sunnites want an earthly ruler.... while the Shi'ites look for one who can establish the" (Kingdom of Heaven on earth and bring an end to all the evils of the world." (۲

.Accordingly, the Sunnis recognize four principles for appointing a caliph

a) Ijma'; that is, consensus of men of power and position on a certain point. The agreement of all the followers of the Prophet is not necessary, nor is it essential to secure .the consent of all the persons of power and position in the ummah

.b) Nomination by the previous caliph

.c) Shura; that is, selection by a committee

d) Military power; that is, if anyone acquires power by military force he will become a .caliph

The author of Sharhu 'l-maqasid has explained that when an Imam dies and a person possessing the requisite qualifications claims that office (without the oath of

p: ۵۷

.at-Taftazani: Sharh 'Aqa'idi'n-Nasafi, p.۱۸۵ -۱

,Miller,W.M.: tr. of al-Babu 'l-hadi 'ashar, notes -۲

allegiance-bay'ah-having been taken for him and without his having been nominated to succeed), his claim to caliphate will be recognized provided his power subdues the people; and apparently the same will be the case when the new caliph happens to be ignorant or immoral. And similarly when a caliph has thus established himself by superior force but is afterwards subdued by another person, he will be deposed and the conqueror will be recognized as Imam or caliph.(۱)

Qualifications of a Caliph .۱۹

The Sunnis consider ten conditions necessary for a caliph:-

۱. that he be Muslim;

۲. that he be of age, (i.e.,of puberty);

۳. that he be male

۴. that he be of sound mind;

۵. that he be courageous;

۶. that he be free, not a slave;

۷. that he be accessible and not be concealed or hidden;

۸. that he be able to conduct battles and beware of warlike tactics;

۹. that he be just-'adil;

۱۰. that he be able to judge and pass verdicts on points of laws and religion, that is, he be a mujtahid. (۲)

But the last two conditions are in theory only. As quoted in the previous chapter, even an ignorant and immoral person can become a caliph. Therefore, the conditions for 'justice' and 'religious knowledge' are without base.

They hold that infallibility ('ismah) is not necessary for caliphate. The words of Abu Bakr which he spoke from the pulpit before the Companions of the Prophet, are cited in support of that view: "O people! " he said, "I have been made ruler over you although I

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۱ - at-Taftazani: Sharhu 'l-maqasidi' t-talibi'n, (vol. ۲, p. ۲۷۲). See also al-Hafiz 'Ali' Muhammad and Amiru 'd-Din: Fulku 'n-najat fi 'l-imamah wa 's-salat, vol. ۱ p. ۲۰۳.

۲- at-Taftazani, op. cit.

better than you; so, if I perform my duties well, help me; and if I go wrong, you should set me right. You should know that Satan comes to me now and then. So if I am angry, keep (aloof from me."(١

at-Taftazani says in Sharh Aqai'idi 'n-Nasafi "An Imam is not to be deposed from (Imamate on account of immorality or tyranny."(٢

Abu Bakr's rise to power .٢٠

All the above-mentioned principles are derived, not from an ayah or hadith, but from the .events and happenings after the death of the Holy Prophet

According to the Sunnis, the first four Caliphs are called al-khulafai'u'r-rashidun (the . rightly-guided Caliphs). Now let us examine how al khilaifatu 'r-rashidah came into being

Immediately after the death of the Prophet the Muslims of Medina known as ansar (Helpers) gathered in the saqifah (covered porch) of Banu Sa'idah. According to the author of Ghiyathu 'l lugha't, it was a secret location where the Arabs used to gather for their evil activities. (٣)Here Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah, who was then ailing, was led to a stately chair and made to sit upon it, wrapped in a blanket, so that he might be elected as the .Caliph

Sa'd then delivered a speech in which he recounted the virtues of the ansar and told them to take over the caliphate before anyone else could do so. The ansar agreed and said that they wanted him to be the Caliph. But then among themselves, they began to ask: "What reply should we give to the muhajirun (emigrants

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١- as-Suyuti, Tarikhu 'l-Khulafa', p.٧١.

٢- at-Taftazani: op. cit.

٣- Ghiyathu 'd-Din: Ghiyathu 'l-lughat, p. ٢٢٨.

?from Mecca) of the Quraysh if they oppose this move and put forth their own claim

A group said: "We shall tell them, let us have one leader from among you and one from ."us." Sa'd said: "This is the first weakness you have shown

Someone informed 'Umar ibn al-Khattab of this gathering saying: "If at all you desire to acquire the dignity of rulership you should reach the saqifah before it is too late and difficult for you to change what is being decided there." On receiving this news, 'Umar, along with Abu Bakr, rushed to the saqifah. Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah also accompanied .them

at-Tabari, Ibnu 'l-Athir, Ibn Qutaybah (۱) and others proceed with their narrations stating that having reached the saqifah, Abu Bakr, 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaydah had hardly taken their seats when Thabit ibn Qays stood up and began enumerating the virtues of the ansar and suggested that the office of the caliphate should be offered to someone from .the ansar

Umar is reported to have said later on: "When the speaker of the ansar finished his' speech, I made an attempt to speak as already I had thought over some important points, but Abu Bakr beckoned me to keep quiet. Therefore, I remained silent. Abu Bakr had more competence and knowledge than myself. He then said the same things I had ."thought of and expressed them even better

According to Rawdatu 's-safa', Abu Bakr addressed the assembly at the saqifah thus: "Assembly of the ansar! We acknowledge your good

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۱ - at-Tabari: at-Tarikh, vol.۴, p.۱۸۲۰; Ibnu'۱-Athir: al-Kamil, ed. C.J.Tornberg, Leiden,۱۸۹۷, .vol.۲, pp. ۳۲۵ff; Ibn Qutaybah: al-Imamah wa's-siyasah, Cairo, ۳۸۷/۱۹۶۷, vol. ۱, pp. ۱۸ff

qualities and virtues. We have also not forgotten your struggles and endeavours for promoting the cause of Islam. But the honour and respect the Quraysh have among the Arabs is not enjoyed by any other tribe, and the Arabs will not submit to anyone other than the Quraysh." (۱)

In as-Sirah al-Halabiyyah, it is added:

"However, it is a fact that we the muhajirun were the first to accept the Islamic creed. The Prophet of Islam was from our tribe. We are the relatives of the Apostle ... and therefore we are the people who are entitled to the caliphate... It will be advisable to have the leadership among us and for you to take the ministry. We will not act unless we consult with you."' (۲)

Heated arguments started, during which 'Umar cried: "By Allah, I will kill him who Opposes us now." al-Hubab ibn al-Mundhir ibn Zayd, an ansari from the Khazraj tribe, challenged him saying: "By Allah, we will not allow anyone to rule over us as a caliph. One leader must come from you and one from us."Abu Bakr said: 'No, this cannot be; it is our right to be the rulers and yours to be our ministers." al-Hubab said: "O ansar! Do not submit yourselves to what these people say. Be firm . . . By Allah, if anyone dares to oppose me now, I will cut his nose with my sword." 'Umar remarked: "By Allah, duality is not advisable in the caliphate. There cannot be two kings

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۱- Mir Khwand: Rawdatu 's-safa', vol ۲, p. ۲۲۱

۲- al-Halabi: as-Sirah, vol. ۳, p. ۳۵۷.

in one regime, and the Arabs will not agree to your leadership, because the Apostle was ."not from your tribe

At-Tabari and Ibnu 'l-Athir both state that there was a fairly prolonged exchange of words between al-Hubab and 'Umar on this matter. 'Umar cursed al-Hubab: "May Allah ."kill you." al-Hubab retorted: "May Allah kill you

Umar then crossed over and stood at the head of Said ibn 'Ubadah and said to him: "We' want to break every limb of yours." Infuriated by this threat, Said got up and caught 'Umar's beard. 'Umar said: "If you pull out even one hair, you will see that all will not be well with you." Then Abu Bakr pleaded with 'Umar to be calm and civil. 'Umar turned his face from Sa'd who was saying: "By Allah, had I strength enough just to stand, you would have heard the lions roar in every corner of Medina and hidden yourselves in holes. By Allah, we would have made you join again with those people among whom you were only ."a follower and not a leader

Ibn Qutaybah says that when Bashir ibn Sa'd, the chief of the tribe of Aws, saw that the ansar were uniting behind Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah, the chief of the Khazraj, he was overcome .with envy and stood up supporting the claim of the Qurayshite muhajirun

In the midst of this melee, 'Umar said to Abu Bakr: "Hold out your hand so that ۱ may give :my bay'ah (i.e., pledge of loyalty)." Abu Bakr said

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No, you give me your hand so that I may give my bay'ah, because you are stronger than" ."me and more suitable to the caliphate

Umar took the hand of Abu Bakr and pledged allegiance to him saying: "My strength is' not of any value when compared to your merits and seniority. And if it is of any value then ."my strength added to yours will successfully manage the caliphate

Bashir ibn Sa'd followed suit. Khazrajites cried to him that he was doing it out of envy for Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah. Then the tribe of Aws talked amongst themselves that if Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah was made caliph that day, the tribe of Khazraj would always feel themselves superior to the Aws, and no one from the Aws would ever achieve that dignity. Therefore, .they all pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr

.Someone from the Khazraj tribe took out his sword but was overcome by the others

Amidst all this unseemly wrangling, 'Ali and his friends attended to the washing of the body of the Holy Prophet and the proper observances regarding burial. By the time these .were over, Abu Bakr had achieved a fait accompli

Ibn-Qutaybah writes: "When Abu Bakr had taken the caliphate, 'Ali was dragged to Abu Bakr as he repeatedly declared, 'I am the slave of Allah and the brother of the Messenger of Allah.' Then 'Ali was commanded to take the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. 'Ali said: 'I have more rights to the caliphate than anyone of you. I

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will not pledge obedience to you. As a matter of fact, you should give the pledge of obedience to me. You called the ansar to give their bay'ah on the ground that you had .blood relations with the Messenger of Allah

You are usurping the caliphate from us, the members of his house. Did you not reason with the ansar that you have better rights to the caliphate than they because the Apostle was of your kinship, and they handed over the government to you and accepted your leadership? Therefore, the very reason put forth by you before the ansar is now forwarded by me. Our relations with the Apostle in life as well as in death are much closer than those of anyone of you. If you are faithful to your argument, you should do justice; .'otherwise you know that you have knowingly moved towards tyranny

Umar said, 'Unless you give bay'ah, you will not be released.' 'Ali cried, Milk out as much'" as you can for the udders are in your hand. Make it as strong as possible today, for he is going to hand it over to you tomorrow. 'Umar, I will not yield to your commands: I shall not pledge loyalty to him.' Ultimately Abu Bakr said, 'O 'Ali! If you do not desire to give your .' "bay'ah, I am not going to force you for the same

Short review .۲۱

:Several aspects of the above-mentioned events deserve more attention

It was the tradition of the Arabs that once a .۱

person was declared, even by a small group, to be the chief of the tribe, others did not like to oppose him, and willy-nilly followed suit. This tradition was in the mind of'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, when he told 'Ali: "Give me your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to ."you . . . because once this thing is taken over no one will ask him to relinquish it

And it was this tradition which prompted Sa'd to exhort the ansar to 'take over the .'caliphate before anyone else could do so

And it was because of this tradition that 'Umar was told to reach saqifah 'before it was too late and difficult for him to change what was being decided there.' And it was because of this custom that once some people accepted Abu Bakr as Caliph, the majority of the .Muslims in Medina followed suit

Ali was well-aware of this custom. Then why did he refuse to extend his hand to accept .'٢ the bay'ah of 'Abbas, telling him, "Who else, other than I, can call for such pledge of (allegiance?(١)

It was because 'Ali knew that the khalifah (caliphate) of the Holy Prophet was not the chieftainship of the tribe. It was not based on the declaration of allegiance by the public. It was a responsibility given by Allah, not by the people. And as he had already been publicly appointed by Allah through the Prophet to the Imamate, there was no need for him to rush to the

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Ibn Qutaybah: al-imamah wa 's-siyasah, vol. ١, p. ۴; al-Mawardi: al-Ahkamu 's- - ١ .sultaniyyah, p. ٧

public to seek their allegiance. He did not want the people to think that his Imamate was based on the bay'ah of men; if the people came to him on the basis of the declaration of .Ghadir Khumm, well and good; if they did not, it was their loss, not his

Now we turn to the events of saqifah: During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, the .۳ Mosque of the Prophet was the centre of all Islamic activities. It was here that decisions of war and peace were made, deputations were received, sermons were delivered and cases were decided. And when the news spread of the death of the Holy Prophet, the .Muslims assembled in that very mosque

Then why did the partisans of Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah decide to go three miles outside Medina to meet in saqifah which was not a place of good repute? Was it not because they wanted to usurp the Caliphate without the knowledge of other people and then present Sa'd as the ?accepted Caliph

Keeping in view the declaration of Ghadir Khumm and the tribal custom of Arabia there .can be no other explanation

When 'Umar and Abu Bakr came to know of that gathering, they were in the mosque. A .۴ majority of the Muslim were at the mosque. Why did they not inform any other person about that gathering? Why did they, together with Abu 'Ubaydah, slip out secretly? Was it because 'Ali and Banu Hashim were present in the mosque and in the house

of the Prophet, and 'Umar and Abu Bakr did not want them to know of the plot? Was it because they were afraid that if 'Ali came to know of that meeting of saqifah, and if by a remote chance he decided to go there himself, no one else would have had a chance to ?succeed

When Abu Bakr was extolling the virtues of muhajirun as being from the tribe of the .۵ Holy Prophet, did he not know that there were other people with much more stronger right to that claim because they were members of the very family of the Holy Prophet and ?his own flesh and blood

It was this aspect of the pretence that prompted 'Ali ibn Ab; Talib (as) to comment: "They argued by the strength of the tree (tribe) and then destroyed the fruit (i.e., the family of (the Prophet)." (١)

Looking dispassionately at this event, we are unable to call it an 'election', because the voters (all the Muslims scattered throughout Arabia, or, at least, all the Muslims of Medina) did not even know that there was to be an election, let alone when or where it was to be held. Aside from the voters, even prospective candidates were unaware of what was happening at saqifah. Again we are reminded of the words of al-Imam 'A١i in :connection with the two points mentioned above

,If you claim to have secured authority over the Muslims' affairs by consultation

!How did it happen when those to be consulted were absent

And

p: ۶٧

.ar -Radi (ed): Nah ju 'l -balaghah, (Subhi as.Salih' s edition), Beirut, p. ٩٨ -١

,if you have scored over your opponents by (the Prophet's) kinship

.(Then someone else has greater right on the Prophet and is nearer to him(١

And we cannot call it even a ' selection' because a majority of the prominent Companions of the Holy Prophet had no knowledge of these events. 'Ali, 'Abbas, 'Uthman, Talhah, azZubayr, Sa'd ibn Ab; Waqqas, Salman al-Farisl, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, .Miqdad, 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf-none of them were consulted or even informed

The only argument which can be offered for this caliphate is this: "Whatever the legal position of the events of saqifah, as Abu Bakr succeeded (because of tribal custom) in ."taking the reins of power in his hands, he was a 'constitutional' Caliph

In simple language, Abu Bakr became a constitutional Caliph because he succeeded in his bid for power. Thus, the Muslims who have been taught to glorify this event are inadvertently taught that the only thing which counts is the 'power'. Once you are secure in the seat of power, everything is all right. You will become the 'constitutional' head of .state

In the end, I should quote a comment of 'Umar himself, who was the author of this :caliphate. He said in a lecture during his caliphate

I have been informed that someone said: "When'Umar dies, I will pledge allegiance to so-and-so." Well no one should be misled like this, thinking that although the allegiance of Abu Bakr was by surprise, it became all right. Of course, it was by surprise, but Allah

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Ibid., Saying no.l٩٠, [pp.۵٠٢-٣] . The words of 'Ali have been quoted by ash-Sharif ar-Radi -١ under Saying no. ١٩٠ which runs as follows: "How strange? Could the caliphate be through the (Prophet's) companionship but not through (his) companionship plus (his) kinship?" It is surprising to note that Subhi as-Salih's edition and Muhammad 'Abduh's edition (Beirut,١٩٧٣) have omitted the wordings "but not through (his) companionship! " For a .complete version of this saying, see Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Sharh (Cairo,l٩۵٩),vol. ١٨, p.۴١۶

(saved us from its evils. Now if anyone wishes to copy it I will cut his throat.(۱

Nomination of 'Umar .۲۲

The majority of Sunnis believe that what happened at saqifah was a manifestation of the "democratic" spirit of Islam. In view of that belief it was reasonable to expect the 'democratic election' (whatever it's meaning in the context of saqifah) to continue as the .basis of Islamic caliphate. But this was not to be

Abu Bakr was indebted to 'Umar for establishing his caliphate and he knew that if the masses were given freedom of choice, 'Umar had no chance. (He was known as "rude .and of harsh nature.") Therefore, he decided to nominate his own successor-'Umar

at-Tabari writes: "Abu Bakr called 'Uthman -when the former was dying-and told him to write an appointment order, and dictated to him: 'In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is the order of 'Abdullah ibn Abi Quhafah (i.e., Abu Bakr) to the Muslims. Whereas...' Then he fell unconscious. 'Uthman added the words: 'I appoint 'Umar ibn al-.'Khattab as my successor among you

Then Abu Bakr regained his consciousness and told 'Uthman to read the order to him." 'Uthman read it; Abu Bakr said, Allahu Akbar', and was pleased and commented, 'I think you were afraid that people would disagree amongst themselves if I died in that state.' 'Uthman replied, 'Yes.' Abu Bakr said: ' May Allah reward you on behalf of Islam and the Muslims.'(۲) Thus, the appointment letter was completed and Abu Bakr

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۱ - al-Bukhari': as-Sahih, ("Kitabu 'l-Muhakibin"), Cairo, (n.d.), vol.۸, p.۲۱۰; at-Tabari: at-Tarikh, vol.۴, p.l۸۲۱.

۲- at-Tabari: at-Tarikh, pp. ۲۱۳۸-۹

.ordered it to be read before the Muslims

Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid al-Mu'tazili writes that when Abu Bakr regained his consciousness and the scribe read what he had written and Abu Bakr heard the name of 'Umar, he asked him, "How did you write this?" The scribe said, "You could not pass him over." Abu Bakr (replied, "You are right."(۱

:Shortly afterwards Abu Bakr died

Umar gained the caliphate by this appointment. Here one is reminded of a tragedy which' .occurred three or five days before the death of the Holy Prophet

In the Sahih of Muslim there is a tradition narrated by Ibn 'Abbas that: "Three days before the Prophet's death 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and other Companions were present at his side. The Apostle said, 'Now let me write something for you by way of a will so that you are not mislead after me.' 'Umar said, 'The Apostle is talking in delirium; the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.' 'Umar's statement caused a furor among those present there. Some were saying that the Apostle's command should be obeyed so that he might write whatever he desired for their betterment others sided with 'Umar. When the tension and (uproar increased the Apostle said, 'Go away from me. '" (۲

:A few Qur'anic injunctions should be mentioned here

Muslims should not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet . . . lest your deeds .(become null while you perceive not (۴۹:۲

:The Holy Prophet's words were "revelation" from Allah

Nor does he speak

p: ۷۰

.Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid: Sharh., vol. ۱, pp.۱۶۳-۵ -۱

Muslim: as-Sahih, ("Kitabu 'l-Wasiyyah", Babu 't-tarki 'lwasiyyah), vol. ۵, pp.۷۵-۶; al- -۲ Bukhari: as-Sahih, (Cairo, ۱۹۵۸), vol. ۱, ("Kitabu 'l-'Ilm") pp.۳۸-۹; vol.۴, p.۸۵; vol.۶, pp.ll-۲; vol.۷, ("Kitabu 't-Tib"), pp.۱۵۵-۶; vol. ۹, ("Kitabu '۱I' tisam bi 'l -Kitab wa 's-Sunnah"), p. ۱۳۷.

It is interesting to note that where Bukhari gives remark of the Prophet speaking in delirium, he omits the name of the speaker; and where he paraphrases that remark in more polite language, he mentions the name of the speaker - 'Umar - clearly. Ibn Sa'd: at-Tabaqat, vol. ۲, pp.۲۴۲, ۳۲۴f, ۳۳۶, ۳۶۸; Ahmad: al-Musnad, vol. I, pp .۲۳۲,۲۳۹, ۳۲۴f, ۳۳۶,۳۵۵

.(out of (his) desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed (۵۳: ۳-۴

':And Muslims were expected to follow his command without any 'ifs' and 'buts

Whatever the Apostle gives you, take it; and from whatever he forbids you, keep back. (۵۹ (:۷

And when such an Apostle, five days before his death wished to write a directive to save '.Muslims from going astray, he was accused of 'talking in delirium

When Abu Bakr who had no such Divine protection from error, began dictation of the appointment letter in such critical condition that he fell unconscious before naming his !successor, 'Umar did not say that he was talking in delirium

No one can be sure of what it was the Holy Prophet wanted to write. But the phrase he :used gives us an idea. On several occasions the Holy Prophet had declared

O People! Verily, I am leaving behind among you Two Precious Things, the Book of Allah and My Descendants who are my family members. So long as you keep hold of them .sincerely, you will never go astray after me

When he used the same phrase five days before his death (".. Let me write something for you by way of a will so that you are not misled after me"), it was easy enough to understand that the Holy Prophet was going to write what he had been telling them all .(along about the Qur'an and his Ahlu 'l-bayt (as

:Perhaps 'Umar guessed as much; as is apparent from his claim

p: ۷۱

The Book of Allah is sufficient for us." He wanted to make it known to the Prophet that he" .would not follow 'the Two Precious Things '. One was enough for him

And he himself admitted it in a talk with 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, in which he, inter alia said: "And surely he (the Prophet) intended during his illness to declare his ('Ali's) name, so I (prevented it."(۱)

Perhaps the word "delirium" would have served his purpose even if the Prophet had written the directive. 'Umar and his partisans would have claimed that as it was written ."in delirium" it had no validity

Ash-Sura: The committee .۲۳

.After ruling for about ten years, 'Umar was fatally wounded by a Zoroastrian slave, Firuz

Umar was very much indebted to 'Uthman (because of the appointment letter) but did' not wish to openly nominate him as his successor; nor did he allow the Muslims to .exercise their free will after him. He ingeniously invented a third system

He said, "Verily the Apostle of Allah died and he was pleased with these six people from the Quraysh: 'Ali, 'Uthman, Talhah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas and 'Abdu r-Rahman ibn 'Awf. And I have decided to make it (the selection of caliph) a matter of consultation ."among them, so that they may select one from among themselves

They were called when he was nearing death. When he looked at them, he asked, "so, every oneof you wants to become caliph after me?' No one answered. He repeated the question. Then az-Zubayr said, "And what

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Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid: Sharh, vol. ۱۲, p. ۲۱, (quoting from Tari'kh Baghdad of al-Khatib al- - ۱ ;.(Baghdad

is there to disqualify us? You got it (the caliphate) and managed it; and we are not inferior .("to you in the Quraysh either in precedence or in relation (to the Holy Prophet

?"Umar asked, "Should not I tell you about yourselves'

Az-Zubayr said, "Tell us, because even if we ask you not to tell, you will not listen. Then 'Umar began enumerating the bad character points of az-Zubayr, Talhah, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf. Then he faced 'Ali and said, "By Allah you deserved it had it not been that you are of humorous nature. However, by Allah, if you people made him your ruler, he would surely lead you towards clear truth and on the ."enlightened path

Then he looked towards 'Uthman and said, "Take it from me. It is as though I am seeing that the Quraysh have put this necklace (caliphate) around your neck because of your love; then you have put the Banu Umayyah and Banu Abi Mu'ayt ('Uthman's tribe) on the shoulders of the people (as rulers) and have given them exclusively the booty (of the Muslims); thereupon a group from the wolves of Arab have come to you and have .slaughtered you in your bed

By Allah if the Quraysh give the caliphate to you, you will surely give exclusive rights to" the Banu Umayyah; and if you do so, the Muslims will surely kill you." Then he caught the forehead of 'Uthman and said: "So if it happens, remember my words; because

."it is bound to happen

Then 'Umar called Abu Talhah al-Ansari and told him that after his ('Umar's) burial, he was to collect fifty people from the ansar, armed with swords, and gather the six above-mentioned candidate-voters in a house to select one from among themselves as the caliph. If five agree and one disagrees, he should be beheaded; if four agree and two disagree, those two should be beheaded; if there is a division of three and three, the choice of the group of 'Abdu 'r Rahman ibn 'Awf should prevail and if the other three do not agree to it they should be beheaded. And if three days pass and they are unable to reach a decision, all of them should be beheaded and the Muslims should be left free to (select their caliph."(۱

The Shi'ite author Qutbu 'd-Din ar-Rawandi narrates that when 'Umar decreed that the group of 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf would prevail, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas told 'Ali, "Again this is lost to us. This man wants 'Uthman to be the caliph." 'Ali replied, "I also know this; still I will sit with them in the shura', because 'Umar by this arrangement has, at least publicly, accepted that I deserve the caliphate, while before he was asserting that nubuwwah (prophethood) and imamah could not be joined in one family. Therefore, I will participate (in the shura to show the people the contradiction of his actions and his words."(۲

Why were Ibn 'Abbas and 'Ali sure that 'Umar

p: ۷۴

Ibid., vol. l, pp.۱۸۵-۸; see also Ibn Qutaybah: al-Imamah wa 's-siyasah, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۳-۷; -۱ .and at-Tabari:at-Tarikh,(Egypt,n.d.),vol.۵,pp.۳۳-۴۱

Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid: Sharh, p.۱۸۹ -۲

wanted 'Uthman to be the caliph? It was because of the constitution of the shura and its .terms of reference

Abdu 'r-Rahman was married to 'Uthman's sister; and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and 'Abdu'r' .Rahman were cousins

Seeing the hold which family ties had in Arabia, it was unthinkable that Sa'd would oppose 'Abdu 'r-Rahman or that 'Abdu 'r-Rahman would ignore 'Uthman. So three votes were .safely in the custody of 'Uthman, including the deciding vote of 'Abdu'r-Rahman

Talhah (ibn 'Ubaydillah) was from the clan of Abu Bakr, and since the day of saqifah the Banu Hashim and Banu Taym felt nothing but enmity towards each other. On a personal level, 'Ali had killed his uncle; 'Umayr ibn 'Uthman, his brother Malik ibn 'Ubaydillah and his (nephew 'Uthman ibn Malik in the battle of Badr.(١

It was impossible forhim to support 'Ali. az-Zubayr was the son of Safiyyah, 'Ali's aunt, and after saqifah, he had taken out his sword to fight those who had entered the house of 'Ali to take him to Abu Bakr. And it was reasonable to expect him to favour 'Ali. But on the .other hand, he could be tempted to stand for the caliphate himself

Thus, the most 'A١i could hope for was that az-Zubayr was in his favour. Still four would have gone against him and he would have lost. Even if Talhah had favoured 'Ali, he could not be caliph because in case of equal division, the opinion of 'Abdu'r-Rahman would have (been upheld.(٢

After this study

p: ٧٥

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ash-Shaykh al-Mufid: al-Irshad, (with Persian tr. Of Sh. Muhammad Baqir Sa'idi - ١ [. Khurasani), p.۶۵. [See also Eng . tr. of I. K.A. Howard, p .۴٧

This analysis is attributed to 'Ali (as), himself by at-Tabari in at-Tarikh, p.٣۵; (see note -٢ .١٩, above). In that report, the dialogue is said to be between 'A١i (as) and his uncle 'Abbas

of the terms of reference, what happened in the shura is of academic interest only. Talhah withdrew in favour of 'Uthman; prompting az-Zubayr to withdraw in favour of .'Ali(as), and Sa'd in favour of 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf

On the third day, 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf withdrew his name and told 'Ali that he would make him caliph if; Ali pledged to follow the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Holy Prophet and the system of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. 'Abdu 'r-Rahman knew very well what his reply would be. 'Ali (as) said, "I follow the Book of Allah, the traditions of the Holy Prophet ."and my own beliefs

Then 'Abdu'r-Rahman put the same conditions to 'Uthman, who readily accepted. Thus, .'Abdu 'r-Rahman declared 'Uthman to be the caliph

A\i (as) told 'Abdu r-Rahman: "By Allah, you did not do it but with the same hope which he' ('Umar) had from his friend." (He meant that 'Abdu 'r-Rahman had made 'Uthman caliph (.hoping that 'Uthman would nominate him as his successor

Then 'A\i said, "May Allah create enmity between you two." After a few years 'Abdu 'r Rahman and 'Uthman grew to hate each others; they did not talk to each other till 'Abdu'r .Rahman died

Uthman, the third Caliph, was killed by the Muslims who were not happy with his' nepotism. The circumstances did not provide him the opportunity to choose his own successor. Muslims were, for the first time, really free to select or elect a caliph of their choice; they flocked

p: ٧۶

. (to the door of 'Ali (as

But during the twenty-five years which had passed since the death of the Holy Prophet, the nature and outlook of the Muslims had changed to such an extent that many prominent people found 'Ali's administration (which was based on absolute justice and equality, just like the government of the Holy Prophet) unbearable; they could not think of themselves as being treated equal to non-Arab Muslims. So first Talhah, az-Zubayr and .('A'ishah revolted; then Mu'awiyah stood against 'Ali (as

After the martyrdom of 'Ali (as), al-Imam Hasan wanted to continue the war with Mu'awiyah. But most of his officers were, meanwhile, bribed by Mu'awiyah; and many were the commanders who, when sent ahead to intercept Mu'awiyah, changed sides and went over to the enemy. In this situation, al-Imam Hasan (as) had to accept the offer of .Mu'awiyah to conclude a treaty

After this treaty, the Sunnis claimed that military power is a valid way of acquiring .constitutional caliphate

.Thus, the four 'constitutional' ways of caliphate came into being

General review .٢٥

In the realm of politics, usually the constitution of a country is prepared beforehand. And when time comes to elect a government or enact legislation, every function is carried out according to the provisions of the constitution. Whatever conforms with it, is held valid .and legal; whatever is contrary to it, is rejected as invalid and illegal

Since, according to the Sunni point of view, it was the duty of the ummah to appoint a caliph, it was necessary for Allah and

His Prophet to provide them with a constitution (with details of the procedure for election of such a caliph). And if that was not done, then the Muslims themselves should have .approved the constitutional measures in advance before proceeding to elect a caliph

But strangely enough this was not done. And now we find a unique 'unsettled constitution' in which actions do not follow a constitution because there is none; rather the constitution .follows the circumstances

The best argument put forward by the Sunnis to support their claim is that the Muslims of the first era considered it their duty to appoint a caliph, and that they regarded it so important that they neglected to attend the funeral of the Holy Prophet and went to saqifah of Banu Sa'idah to settle the question of the caliphate. From that event they .concluded that the appointment of a caliph was the duty of the ummah

But they fail to understand that it is the validity of that very so-called 'election' which is .challenged by the Shi'ahs

The Shi'ahs claims that that event was illegal; the Sunnis claim that it was legal and ?correct. How can the Sunnis put their claim as their argument and proof

To put their claim as proof is like saying: "This action of mine is legal because I have done ?it." Which court of justice would uphold such an argument

The practical side .۲۶

Leaving aside the academic side of these methods, let us see what effects they had on .the Muslim leadership and Muslim mentality

Within thirty years

p: ۷۸

after the death of the Holy Prophet every conceivable way of acquiring power was used and canonized: election, selection, nomination and military power. The result, is that today every Muslim ruler aspires to occupy the seat of the khilafah and "spiritual leadership" of the Muslims; and it is this basic defect of the Muslims' outlook which has always been, and is today the underlying cause of political instability in the Muslim world. Every Muslim ruler who, as a Muslim, has been taught that "military supremacy" is a constitutional way to khilafah, tries to weaken other Muslim rulers so that he himself may emerge as the most supreme among the Muslim rulers. In this way, this "constitution" .has directly contributed to the weakness of the Muslims in the world

Apart from that, let us see once again how 'all-encompassing' these methods proved immediately after they were invented. This four-sided boundary of caliphate is so unsafe that anyone may enter into it, irrespective of his knowledge or character. The first caliph after Mu'awiyah was his son, Yazid, who was 'nominated' by Mu'awiyah and had ".undisputed "military power

Muslims had given their bay'ah during the lifetime of Mu'awiyah; thus, there was ijma' also. So he was a “constitutional caliph". But what were his beliefs and character? Yazid was a man who bluntly refused to believe in the Holy Prophet. He frankly stated his beliefs in his poem quoted previously that: "Banu Hashim had staged a play to obtain the kingdom; actually there was neither

(any news (from God) nor any revelation.(۱)

Neither did he believe in the Day of Judgment: "O my beloved! Do not believe in meeting me after death, because what they have told you about our being raised after death for judgment is only a myth which makes the heart forget the pleasures of this real world."(۲)

After assuming the caliphate, he openly made fun of Islamic prayers; and showed his disrespect for religion by putting the robes of religious scholars on dogs and monkeys. Gambling and playing with bears were his favourite pastimes. He spent all his time drinking (wine), regardless of place or time and without any hesitation. He had no respect for any woman, even those of the prohibited degrees such as step-mother, sister, aunt and daughter. They were just like any other woman in his eyes.

He sent his army to Medina. That holy city of the Prophet was freely looted. Three hundred girls, apart from other women, were criminally assaulted by his soldiers. Three hundred qurra' (reciters) of the Qur'an and seven hundred Companions of the Prophet were brutally murdered.

The Holy Mosque of the Prophet remained closed for many days; the army of Yazid used it as their stable. Dogs made it their shelter and the pulpit of the Prophet was defiled.

Finally, the Commander of the army compelled the people of Medina to submit before Yazid by giving their bay'ah in these words: "We are the slaves of Yazid; it is up to him whether he gives

p: ۸۰

۱- See note ۹ of Part One.

۲- Sibt ibn al-Jawzi: Tadhkirah, p. ۲۹۱

us back our freedom or sells us in the slaves' market." Those who wanted to swear allegiance on the condition that Yazid should follow the instruction of the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet were put to death.(۱) It may not be out of place to mention that "!the Prophet once said: "May Allah curse him who frightens the people of Medina

Then the army, on the order of Yazid, proceeded to Mecca. That holiest city of Allah was besieged. They could not enter the city, so they used manjaniq (catapult: an ancient military device used to throw heavy stones towards distant targets). With this, they threw stones and flaming torches towards the Ka'bah. The kiswah (canopy of the Ka'bah) was (burnt and a portion of that holiest of buildings was damaged.(۲

Al-Walid and Harun Ar-Rashid .۲۷

But this was not an exception; it sadly proved to be the general rule. a۱-Walid ibn Yazid ibn 'Abdi 'l-Malik was another caliph from the Banu Umayyah. He was a drunkard. One night he was drinking with one of his concubines, till they heard the adhan (call for prayer) of the dawn prayer. He swore that the concubine would lead in the prayer. She wore the (robe of the caliph and led in the prayer in the same condition of drunkenness.(۳

One day he molested his teenage daughter in the presence of her servant woman. She said that (it was not Islam) it was the religion of the Majus. al-Walid recited a couplet: "A man who cares for

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۱- as-Suyuti: Tanrikhu 'l-khulafa', p. ۲۰۹, [see also Eng. tr. Major,H.S.Jarrett, p.۲۱۳]; Abu'l-Fida': at-Tarikh, vol.I, p.۱۹۲; Sibt ibn al-Jawzi: Tadhkirah, p. ۲۸۸; Mir Khwand: Rawdatu 's-safa', vol. ۳, p. ۶۶; Ibn Hajar al-Haytami: as-Sawa'iqu 'l-muhriqah, p. ۷۹.

۲- Ibid.

۳- ad-Diyar Bakri: Tarikhu 'l-khamis, (vol. ۲, p. ۳۲۰), as quoted by Nawwab Ahmad Husayn Khan of Payanwan in his Tari'kh Ahmadi, p. ۳۲۸ [Ibn Shakir: Fawatu 'l-wafayat, vol.۴, pp.۲۵۵-۹]

(the (tongues of) people, dies in sorrow; the daring man gets all the pleasures." (۱)

Harun ar Rashid, the famous Caliph of One Thousand and One Nights who is thought as one of the greatest caliphs, wanted to sleep with one of his late father's concubines. The woman rightly pointed out that this would be incest since she was in a position like his mother. Harun ar-Rashid called al-Qadi Abu Yusuf and told him to help him find a way to satisfy his lust. The Qadi said: "She is just a slave woman.

Should you accept whatever she says? No.

Do not accept her words as true."

So the Caliph satisfied his desire.

Ibn Mubarak comments: "I do not know who among these three was more surprising: the Caliph who put his hand into the blood and property of the Muslims and did not respect his step-mother; or the slave woman who refused to grant the desire of the Caliph; or the Qadi who allowed the Caliph to dishonour his father and sleep with that concubine who was his step-mother.'" (۲)

۲۸. Effects on the beliefs of the justice of God and 'ismah of the prophets

It has been explained that the Sunni beliefs regarding "constitutional caliphate" weakened the Muslims politically and compelled them to obey anyone who succeeded in his bid for power irrespective of his qualifications or character.

As though it was not enough, it compelled them to change their total religious outlook and beliefs.

First of all, an overwhelming majority of the caliphs were devoid of any sense of religious propriety or piety. To justify the caliphate of such

p: ۸۲

۱- as-Suyuti: Tari'khu 'l-khulafa', p. ۲۹۱.

۲- Ibid.

people, they claimed that even the prophets used to commit sins. Thus, the belief in the ('ismah (sinlessness) of the prophets was changed.(١)

As there were perhaps hundreds of people more knowledgeable, more pious and more qualified for the caliphate than the caliph on the throne, they were compelled to say that there was nothing wrong with giving preference to an inferior person over a superior and .more qualified one

When it was pointed out by the Shi'ahs that it was 'evil' according to reason to give preference to an inferior person when a superior person was available, the Sunnis declared that nothing was good or evil in itself, whatever Allah orders becomes good; (whatever He forbids, becomes evil.(٢)

As for 'reason', they denied that it exists anywhere in the religion. It is not possible to go into further detail to show how the belief in the Sunnis' 'constitutional caliphate' affected the whole fabric of Islamic theology, but the following short explanation may suffice for the time being. It is clear that to protect the caliphs, not only the prophets were deprived of their 'ismah, but even Allah was deprived of His 'Justice . From this vantage point, we :may easily understand the full significance of the verse revealed at Ghadir Khumm

O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; (i.e., the Caliphate of 'Ali - a.s.) and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message (at all); and Allah will protect you from

p: ٨٣

.See the author's Prophethood, pp.٩-١٨ -١

See the author's Justice of God, pp.l-٢ -٢

.(the people ... (۵:۶۷

The purity of Islamic beliefs and deeds depended upon the Caliphate of 'Ali (as); if that one message was not delivered, then it would be as though no message were delivered at all. The safety of the whole religion depended upon the Caliphate of 'Ali after the Holy .Prophet

?Is Shi'ism Undemocratic .۲۹

Our opponents look at the succession of the early caliphs and Imams and then claim that Shi'ism is undemocratic. All the Twelve Imams were of one family while the first four Caliphs were of different clans. They conclude that the Sunni school of thought is democratic in principle, which is supposed to be the best system of governance. Shi'ism, .in their opinion, is based on hereditary rule and therefore not a good system

Firstly, no system of government is good or bad of itself; it is as good or bad as the person who holds the reins of the government in his hands. Accordingly, the Shi'ite belief that an Imam is ma'sum, free from every shortcoming and defect and superior in virtue, means that his rule would be the most perfect and just. On one side is the uncompromising justice of al-Imam 'Ali (as), the first Imam, during his short term of Imamate; on the other, the accepted hadith of the Prophet about the last Imam, al-Mahdi that "he will fill the earth with justice and equity as it will be full of oppression and injustice."(۱) Our .premise is not merely an abstraction

Secondly, we should bear in mind that all

p: ۸۴

Abu Dawud: as-Sunan, vol.۴,pp.۱۰۶-۹;Ahmad: al-Musnad, vol.l, pp.۳۷۷,۴۳۰; vol.۳, p.۲۸; al- -۱ Hakim: al-Mustadrak, vol. ۴, pp. ۵۵۷, ۸۶۵

the Sunni caliphs from Abu Bakr to the last 'Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim Billah (killed by Hulagu Khan in ۶۵۶/۱۲۵۸) were from the Quraysh. Does it not mean that one family had ?ruled over all Muslims from eastern China to Spain for six and a half centuries

Thirdly, the Sunni system of the caliphate, as already mentioned, was never based on democracy. The first Caliph was thrust upon the Muslims of Medina by a handful of the Companions; the second was nominated by the first; the third was selected nominally by five people, but actually by one. Mu'awiyah took the caliphate by military overthrow. .Before him it was, at best, oligarchy; after him it became monarchy

So much for the democracy of the constitutional principles utilized. What of the performance of those early governments from the point of view of the equality which ?democracy implies

Umar made a decision that a non-Arab cannot inherit from an Arab unless that heir was' born in Arabia.(۱) Again, the Sunni law going back to early times, for the most part, does not allow a non-Arab man to marry an Arab woman, nor is a non-Qurayshite or non-Hashimate man allowed to marry a Qurayshite or Hashimite woman, respectively. According to the Shafi'ite law, a slave, even a freed one, may not marry a free woman.(۲) This is in spite of the well-known declaration of the Prophet that: "There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for

p: ۸۵

۱- Malik:al-Muwatta',vol.۲,p.۶۰.

۲- al-Jaziri: al-Fiqh 'ala 'l-madhahibi 'l-arba'ah, vol. ۴, p.۶۰.

a white man over a black, nor for a black over a white, except by piety. People are from (Adam and Adam was from dust."(١

Also, it is in spite of the precedents the Prophet established when he married his cousin to Zayd ibn al-Harithah, a freed slave, and gave the sister of 'Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf (a (Qurayshite) in marriage to Bilal, a freed Ethiopian slave.(٢

The Shi'ite shari'ah clearly states: "It is allowed to marry a free woman to a slave, an Arab woman to a non-Arab, a Hashimite woman to a non-Hashimite and vice versa. Likewise, it is allowed to marry women of learned or wealthy families to men of little learning or (wealth or of undignified professions."(٣

In the matter of distribution of war-booty, the Prophet had established a system of equality; it was to be distributed equally to all who had participated in a particular battle. Abu Bakr continued that system, but 'Umar in ١٥ A.H., just four years after the Prophet's death, changed the system. He fixed annual stipends for various people, clans and tribes: 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, was allotted ١٢,٠٠٠ or ٢٥,٠٠٠ dmars per year; 'A'ishah, ١٢,٠٠٠; other wives of the Prophet, ١٠,٠٠٠ each; the participants in the battle of Badr, ۵,٠٠٠ each; those who joined between Badr and Hudaybiyyah, ۴,٠٠٠ each; those who joined after Hudaybiyyah and before Qadisiyyah, ٣,٠٠٠ each. The amount gradually decreased to two (dinars per year. (۴

This system corrupted the Muslim community to such an extent that

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.as-Suyuti:ad-Durru'l-manthur,vol.۶,p.٩٨ -١

Ibnu 'l-Qayyim: Zadu 'l-ma'ad, vol. ۴, p. ٢٢ -٢

al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli: Shara'i'u 'l-Islam, ("Kitabu 'n-Nikah"), vol. ۵, p. ٣٠٠; al-Hakim: - ٣ Minhaju 's.-salihin, ("Kitabu ' n-Nikah"), vol. ٢, p . ٢٧٩

at-Tabari: at-Tarikh, (Annales I), vol.۵, pp.٢۴١١ -۴; Nicholson,R.A.: A Literary History of -۴ theArabs

wealth became their sole aim in life and the only benefit of their religion. Their outlook became materialistic and, as mentioned earlier, they could not tolerate the system of equal distribution which 'Ali reinstated in the first speech he gave after taking over the .(caliphate(١

Ali is quoted to have said: Well, any man from the muhajirun and the ansar, from the' Companions of the Prophet, who thinks that he is superior to others because of his companionship (let him remember that) the shining superiority is tomorrow before Allah, and its reward and wages are with Allah. (He should not expect its reward in this world.) Any man who answered the call of Allah and His Prophet, and accepted the truth of our religion and entered into it, and faced towards our qiblah, is entitled to all the rights of Islam and bound by its limits. You are the servants of Allah; and all property is the property of Allah; it will be divided among you equally; there is no preference in it for one .against the other

Those who during the twenty years preceding 'Ali's caliphate had grown used to the unfair distribution, advised and requested 'Ali to compromise; and when he proved .unrelenting on matters of Islamic principle, they conspired against him

After the victory of the Umayyads this inequality between Muslims was carried further. Even if someone accepted Islam, he or she was not accorded the rights of the Muslims. In some way their condition was worse than that

p: ٨٧

Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid: Sharh, vol.٧, pp.٣٥-٧; see also al-Imam 'Ali's Sermon no. ١٢۶ in Nahju 'l- -١ balaghah

of their compatriot non-Muslims. The latter were obliged to pay only jizyah(١), but the Muslims had to pay that and the zakat (the tax paid by the Muslims). During the Umayyad period (except for two and a half years during 'Umar ibn 'Abdi 'l-'Aziz's reign), jizyah was (levied on all non Arabs including the Muslims. (٢

It is not difficult to imagine how little this policy helped the cause of Islam. For centuries entire countries whose cities and capitals were "Islamic", refused to convert. Even the Berbers (who responded after initial resistance to the Arab invasion and served so brilliantly in Spain and on into France), as a whole were not converted until the establishment of the first Shi'ite kingdom in al-Maghrib. When Idris ibn 'Abdillah, a great - grandson of al Imam Hasan and the founder of the Idrisid dynasty (٧٨٩ ٩٨٥ A.D.), marched against them, most were non-Muslims. This was the result of the ill-treatment in earlier times. We hear that when Yazid ibn 'Abdi'l Malik occupied the Umayyad throne and assigned Yazid ibn Abi Muslim Dinar as Governor of al-Maghrib, the latter re-levied jizyah on those who had become Muslims and ordered them back to the villages where they had lived before their conversion.(٣) The Idrisid change of policy and the extension of full .Islamic rights to all the Muslims brought the conversion of the Berbers

This exaltation of Arabism is seen to be even more deeply interwoven in the decision of those early rulers that if a subject

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(Jizyah: poll-tax or tilthes, payable by non-Muslims in the realm of Islam. (pub -١

at-Tabari: at-Tarikh, (Annales II), vol. ٣, pp. ١٣٥۴, ١٣۶٧ -٢

al-Amin: Islamic Shi'ite Encyclopedia, vo١. ١, pp. ٣٨ ۴١ -٣

in a conquered country accepted Islam, he could not be accepted as a Muslim or accorded his Islamic rights unless he attached himself as a client to some Arab tribe. Such clients were called mawali. Even then they were objects of ridicule and unequal treatment by their aristocratic patrons and at the same time continued to be exploited by the .growing bureaucracy

By restricting the right of rule to the twelve infallible Imams. Allah cut at the roots of strife, .dissension, chaos and false electioneering, as well as social and racial inequality

?A Dynastic rule .٣٠

Some say that the Shi'ite school holds that the Holy Prophet wanted to establish a .(dynastic monarchy for his family (in which he obviously failed

They imply that as the Holy Prophet was far above such selfish motives, the Shi'ite school must be wrong. But these very people say that the Hoy Prophet said:"The Imams will be from the Quraysh." Will they say that this hadith means that the Holy Prophet wanted to establish a kingdom for his tribe? Will they say that the Holy Prophet said these words ?"because of "selfish motives

It was explained above that Abu Bakr silenced the ansar of Medina by saying that as the Holy Prophet was from the Quraysh, the Arabs would not accept any non-Qurayshite as .caliph. This argument silenced the ansar

By the same argument, if a member of the family of the Holy Prophet (like 'Ali) were made caliph, all would have obeyed him and there would have been no strife or

p: ٨٩

difficulty. This aspect of the appointment of ‘Ali (as), has been recognized also by some :non-Muslim writers. Mr. Sedillot has written

Had the principle of hereditary succession (in favour of 'Ali-a.s.) been recognized at the" outset, it would have prevented the rise of those disastrous pretentions which engulfed Islam in the blood of Muslims.... The husband of Fatimah united in his person the right of (succession as the lawful heir of the Prophet, as well as the right of election. "(١

The fact is that such objectors have completely missed the point. The Shi'ahs has never claimed that "inheritance" has anything to do with the Imamate. As explained earlier, an Imam must be ma'sum, superior to all the ummah in virtue and mansus min Allah .((appointed by Allah

But it was one of the bounties of Allah, bestowed on Prophet Ibrahim and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon them and their progeny) that, in reality and practice, all the Imams who followed them came from their own family; that all those who had necessary .qualifications for the Imamate were of their progeny

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In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities in .religious, cultural and scientific fields

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Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes .of people interested in reading, with various formats in the cyberspace

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